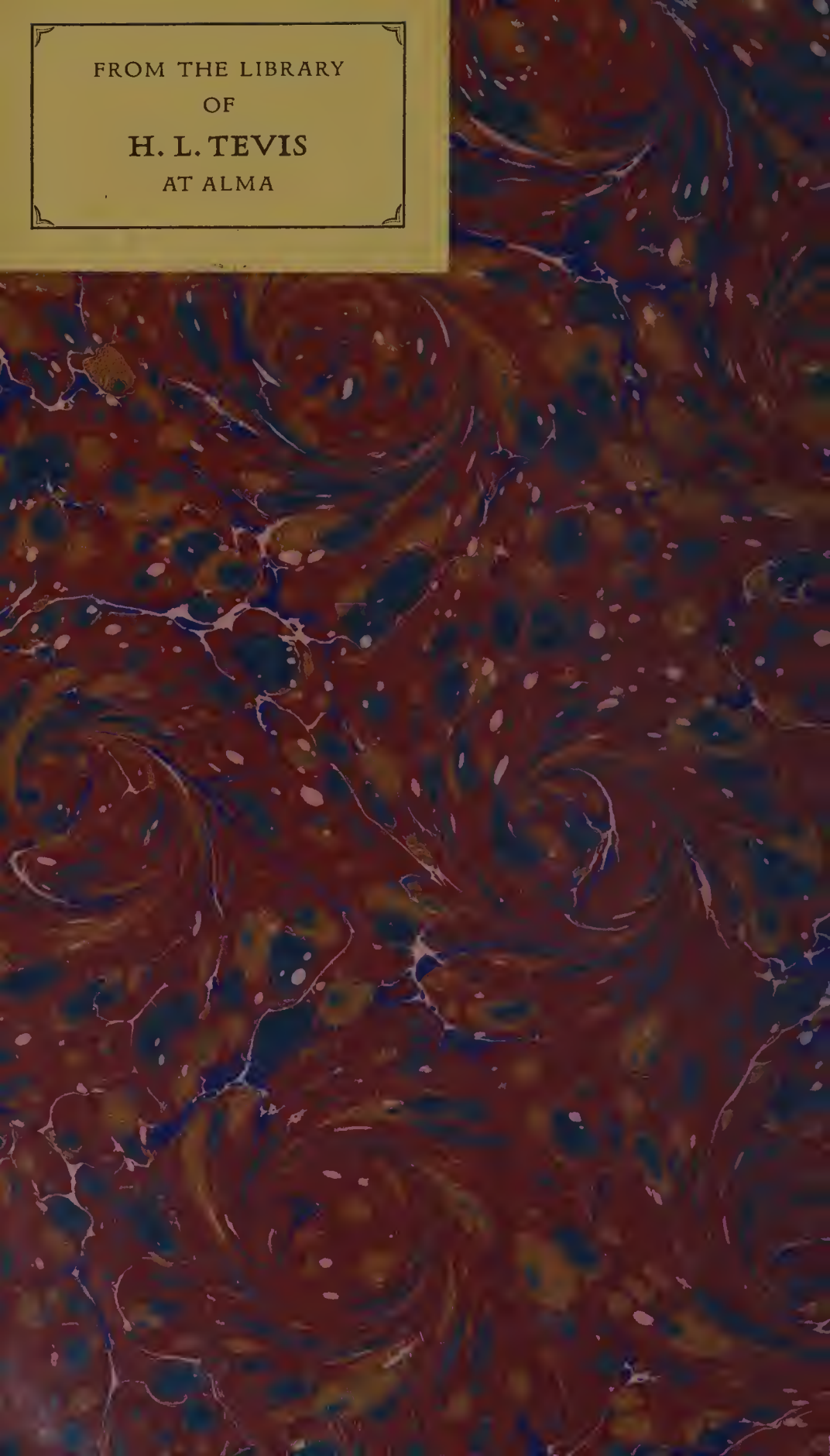
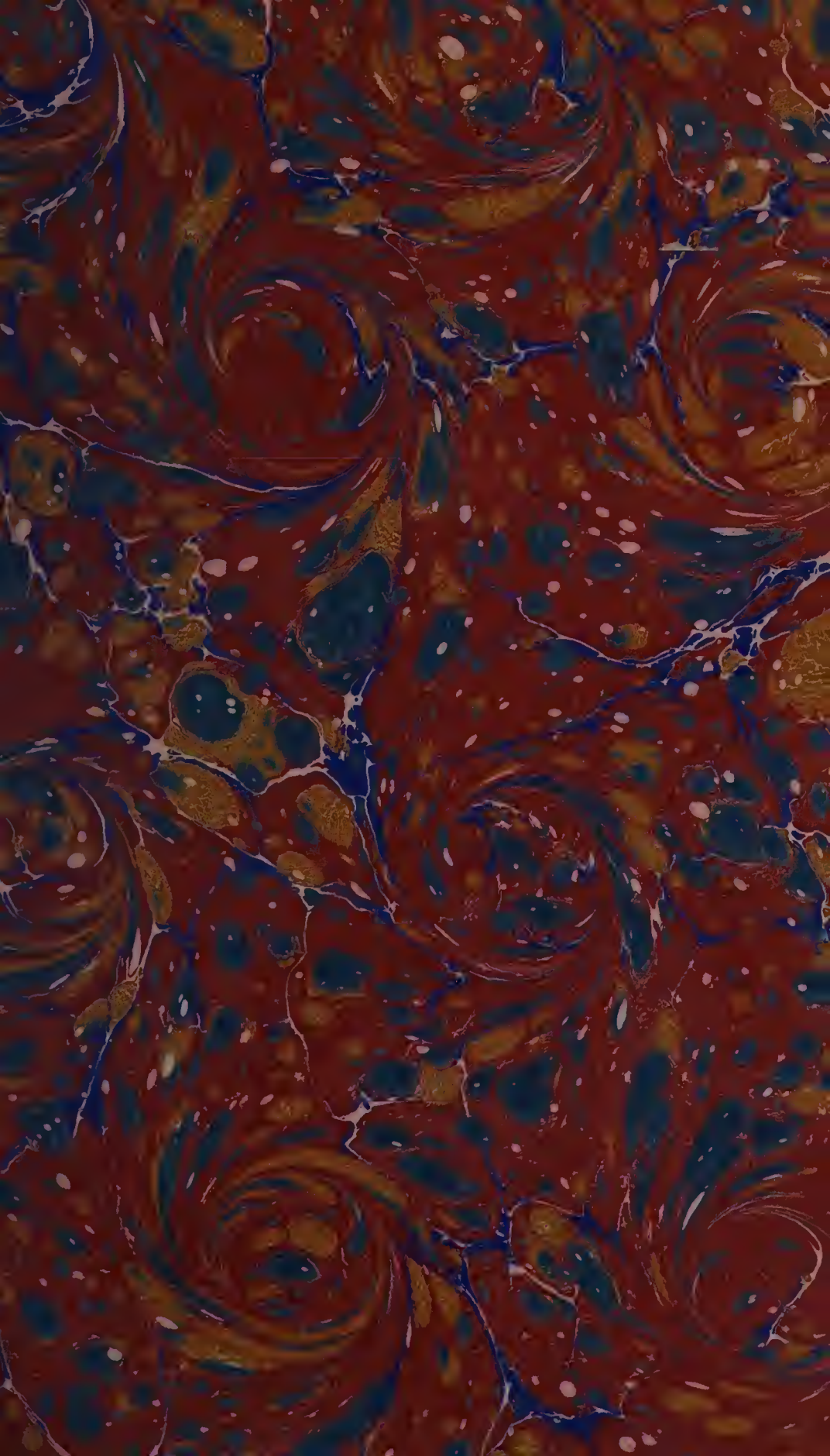




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The Theatre



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Monthly Review & Magazine.



❖ VOL. XXIX. ❖

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1897.



London :

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, & CO.,

STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C.



The Theatre,

— A MONTHLY REVIEW AND MAGAZINE. —

Founded in 1877, The Theatre has been under a new editorship since the number for September, 1894, inclusive.

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INDEX TO VOL. XXIX.

	PAGE
Acting : the art of	210, 259
Adams, Mr. W. Davenport, articles by	198, 255
After the Play	213
Alexander, Mr. George, portrait of, as Orlando, 129; in a new part	284
<i>Aladdin</i> , Mr. Oscar Barrett's, Drury Lane Pantomime	104
<i>Amateur Wife</i> , <i>An</i> *	341
Archer, Mr. W., on the Drama	118
<i>As You Like It</i> , at the St. James's . .	37
Bancroft, Mr. & Mrs., portraits and memoirs of	7
Barnes, Mr. J. H., portrait and memoir of	96
Barrett, Mr. Wilson, portrait of, in <i>The Daughters of Babylon</i> , 158; criticism of his authorship of, and acting in, the same play	162
Barry, Shiel, Mr., death of	238
Beatty-Kingston, Mr. W., article by . .	21
Beckett, Mr. Arthur à, articles by . .	74, 251
<i>Belle Belair</i> *	343
Bennett, Mr. Joseph, article by	134
Berlin, the drama in, 45, 106, 173, 226, 293,	349
Bernhardt, Mme., fête in honour of 15, 56; in new parts, 44, 170, 346; her London popularity, 81; anecdote of, 236; her bust of M. Sardou exhibited, 301; appears in a Biblical play, 346; plays before the Queen	354
<i>Bit of Old Chelsea</i> , <i>A</i> *	167
<i>Black Ey'd Susan</i>	97
Buchanan, Mr. Robert, article by, 68; new play by.	223
Calmour, Mr. Alfred C., verses by . .	281
Campbell, Mrs. Patrick, in new parts .	40, 160
Church, The, and the Stage	307
<i>Circus Girl</i> , <i>The</i> *	38
Comédie-Française, the, sketch history of, 60; managerial receipts during their visit to London in 1879	78
Compton, Miss, portrait and memoir of	67
<i>Court of Honour</i> , <i>A</i> *	337
Critics and their qualifications	25
<i>Daughters of Babylon</i> *	162
Davey, Mr. Richard, article by	210
Davis, Miss Fay, portrait and memoir of	248
<i>Delilah</i> , <i>The Kiss of</i> *	39
Disturbances on first nights	74, 119
<i>Dr. Johnson</i> *	338
Doran, Dr.	82
Drama, the, and Charity	87
Drama, the, and the City of London, 142; The Greek, Prof. Murray on, 322; The Victorian	319
Dramatists, The Dearth of	205, 268, 274
Edwards, Mr. H. Sutherland, articles by	148, 322

	PAGE
<i>Eider-Down Quilt</i> , <i>The</i> *	102
Elliott, Mr. Henry, article by	25
English Actors in Germany	154
Escott, Mr. Arthur, articles by	85, 277
<i>Extraordinary behaviour of Mrs. Jallowby</i> , <i>The</i> *	43
<i>Fantastics</i> , <i>The</i> ; or <i>the Princess and the</i> <i>Butterfly</i> *	284
Fenn, Mr. G. Manville, story by	89
Fiske, Mr. Stephen, article by, 29, honours for	62
<i>French Maid</i> , <i>The</i> *	340
Fullerton, Mr. W. Morton, article by . .	15
Fyfe, Mr. H. H., article by	319
Gatti, Mr. A., death of	120
Godfrey, Mr. G. W., death of	304
<i>Grave Mistake</i> , <i>A</i> *	89
Hare, Mr., in America	113, 180, 299
Harris, Mr. Charles, death of	186
Hawtrej, Mr. Charles, portrait and memoir of	82
Hawkins, Mr. Frederick, article by. . .	331
Her Majesty's Theatre, opening of. . .	164
<i>His Majesty</i> *	236
Historical Figures on the Stage. 125, 184,	78
Hollingshead, Mr. John, article by . .	195
Homfrey, Miss Gladys, portrait and memoir of	335
Ibsen, Dr., anecdotes of, 61, 242; descrip- tion of his ways, 118; new play by . .	41
<i>Idyll of the Closing Century</i> , <i>An</i> * . . .	35
Irving, Sir Henry, as Richard III., 35; slight accident to, 56, 115; anecdote of Tennyson concerning the Richard III., 56; twenty-fifth anniversary of his first performance in <i>The Bells</i> , 56; Mr. J. F. Nisbet upon his Richard III., 115; M. Claretie's opinion upon his work, 182; his knighthood, 196; his reappearance after his accident, 233; Sir Edward Russell upon his Richard III., 249; his performance as Napoleon, 282; his "make up" in that part, 251; M. Coquelin upon his Napoleon, 300; the announcement of his reading of <i>Becket</i> in Canterbury Cathedral discussed, 307; honours to, from Ger- many, 354; drawing of, as Napoleon, 318; present to, from M. Sardou, 354; speeches by, 354; M. Filon's opinion of his work	356
Italian cities, the drama in 51, 110, 178, 230, 296, 350	
Jeffries, Miss Maud, portrait of, in <i>The Daughters of Babylon</i>	158
<i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> ,* 335; anticipa- tory description of, 118; sequel to, 137; expert opinion upon	241
Jones, Mr. H. A., new play by	286

	PAGE
<i>Julius Cæsar</i> , stage history of	277
<i>Key to King Solomon's Riches</i> , <i>The</i> *	103
Knight, Mr. Joseph, article by, 70; letter to	311
Kuhe, Mr. Ernest, article by	155
Labiche, Eugène	148
Ladies and Royal Honours	196
<i>Lady Lawyer</i> , <i>The</i> *	222
<i>La Poupée</i> *	
Lawrence, Mr. W. J., article by	31
Leclercq, Miss Rose, portrait and memoir of	310
<i>Little Eyolf</i> *	40
London, the City of, and the Drama	142
<i>Lost, Stolen, or Strayed</i> *	
Madrid, the drama in	53, 112, 179, 230, 297, 351
<i>MacHaggis</i> , <i>The</i> *	219
Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, comic opera by	164
<i>Madame Sans-Gêne</i> ,* 282; M. Sardou's account of its genesis	300
Madden, Mr. F. H., article by	87
"Making-up," a note on	251
<i>Mariana</i> *	166
<i>Mariners of England</i> , <i>The</i> *	223
Meredith, Mr. George, on Comedy	237
Millett, Miss Maud, retirement of	238
<i>Mr. Symphyn</i> *	342
Morton, Mr. Edward, article by	259
Musical Criticism and Critics	21
<i>My Friend the Prince</i> *	168
Napoleon and the Stage, 53, 130, 316; portrait of Sir Henry Irving as	318
<i>Nelson's Enchantress</i> *	160
New York, the drama in	54, 113, 180, 231, 298, 352
Nisbet, Mr. J. F., article by	313
Nordica, Mme. on opera singers' salaries	243
<i>On Leav</i> *	289
Opera, the	344
Opera in England	134
Ormathwaite, Mr., articles by 9,	130
Pantomime, an old history of	31
Paris, the drama in, 44, 105, 170, 224, 290, 345	
Past Year, the	1
Pemberton, Mr. T. Edgar, new play by, 240; article by	274
<i>Physician</i> , <i>The</i> *	286
<i>Pierrot's Life</i> , <i>A</i> *	98
<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> , <i>The</i> *	101
Pinero, Mr. A. W., new play by	284
Players, recent detraction of	63, 184
Playgoers, unpunctual	245, 357
Playgoing, the price of	155
Plays and Novels	68
Plays without words	70
Pollock, Mr. Walter Herries, article by	316
<i>Princess of Orange</i> , <i>A</i> *	41
<i>Prodigal Father</i> , <i>The</i> *	169

	PAGE
Queen Sleep (poem)	281
Raleigh, Mr. Cecil, article by	196
Revivals of old plays	255
<i>Richard III.</i> , stage history of, 9; revival of at the Lyceum, 35; Sir Edward Russell on Sir Henry Irving's performance of	249
Robertson, Mr. Forbes, as Nelson	160
Robins, Miss Elizabeth, in new parts	40, 166
Russell, Sir Edward, article by	249
Salvini, Signor Alexander, death of	122
Sardou, M., new play by, 170; his opinion upon its failure	305
<i>Saucy Sally</i> *	221
Scott, Mr. Clement, reminiscences of	239
<i>Seats of the Mighty</i> , <i>The</i> ,* 331; its reception in New York	54
<i>Secret Service</i> *	333
Shaw, Mr. Bernard, his tone	19
Shine, Mr. J. L., portrait and memoir of	218
Soldene, Miss Emily, recollections of	85
<i>Solomon's Twins</i> *	
<i>Sorrows of Satan</i> , <i>The</i> *	99
Sothorn, E. A., anecdotes of	274
Stage, The, and the Church	307
Subsidised Theatres	313
Suburban Theatres	202
<i>Tempest</i> , Miss Marie, portrait and memoir of	34
Tennyson, anecdotes of	56, 235
Terry, Miss Ellen, a French opinion of her Imogen, 115; her opinion of Signora Duse, 234; in a new part, 282; M. Coquelin's criticism of	300
Terry, Miss Marion, action for libel by	303
<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> on the American stage	231
Theatrical Gossip, the morality of	191
Theatrical Public, The	198
Theatrical Syndicates	263
<i>Their Majesties' Servants</i> , review of a new edition of	82
Tree, Mr. H. Beerbohm, in America, 54, 113; his "Some Aspects of the Drama."	118
<i>Twelfth Night</i> at Middle Temple Hall	186
<i>Two Gentlemen o Verona</i> , <i>The</i> , at Merchant Taylor's Hall	59
Victorian Era Exhibition, the	119, 184, 326
Vienna, the drama in, 48, 109, 176, 228, 295, 347	
Waring, Mr. Herbert, portrait of, in <i>Under the Red Robe</i>	280
Watson, Mr. Malcolm, dialogue by, 137 article by	263
Wilson, Mr. Francis, portrait and memoir of	29
<i>Woman's World</i> *	42
Wyndham, Mr. Charles, in a new part	286
<i>Yashnak</i> , <i>The</i> *	288

* Signifies a first production, † a revival.

THE THEATRE.

JANUARY, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

THE PAST YEAR.



GLANCING in the first month of 1896 over the dramatic record of 1895 and the prospects for the year that has just ended, we sadly declined to speak with much confidence of the immediate outlook. "Sooner or later," we said, "the pendulum will, no doubt, swing back in the direction of a preference for clever and solid dramatic work to smartness and triviality." To this belief we still hold, though, unfortunately, we cannot at present point to our expectations as having been to any great extent fulfilled. "Musical farce" still takes pre-eminence as the form of entertainment that has greatest power to attract. The promised "romantic revival" has resolved itself for the most part into the serving-up at the theatre of stories that have already gained favour in book form. No new playwright has been discovered to help on that "renaissance" of which we heard so much two years ago, and those with established reputations have done little or nothing to add to them. All we can do now a year has run is to repeat our hopes with what assurance we may, and to trust fervently that 1897 may in some degree at any rate leave our anticipations justified. It cannot present a record much less satisfactory, so far as the modern English drama is concerned, than 1896. During the past twelve months we have had nothing at all from our foremost dramatist, Mr. Pinero. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has given us one play dealing with a problem of sex relations in a fashion that commended itself neither to the true realists nor to those whom his more melodramatic work generally attracts, and one excellent comedy, full of wit and observation and humanity, which failed to win the lasting favour it deserved. Mr. Grundy has produced a capital farce, which needed but a

lighter touch to make it a complete success, and a heavy, didactic play that under much tedious dialogue hid some clever character notes and excellent stage-craft. So much for our three principal stage writers. We must return to them later on. In the meantime we come to deal with a more encouraging theme—the revival of interest, both amongst managers and amongst audiences, in the romantic drama, and especially in Shakspeare.

At the Lyceum this interest has, indeed, never stood in need of restoratives. Here long custom has led us to expect, whatever be the prevailing fancy elsewhere, beautiful plays, acted with the fullest appreciation, mounted with taste and skill; and none of these conditions did Sir Henry Irving's production of *Cymbeline* fail to satisfy. Though it is not one of the most interesting of the comedies, it atones for much by giving us one of the tenderest and most beautiful types of sweet womanhood that Shakspeare drew. In Miss Ellen Terry we saw an ideal Imogen, and had her performance been the sole noteworthy point in the revival, one would still have felt grateful to Sir Henry Irving for undertaking it. But this was far from being the case. Sir Henry Irving's own performance as Iachimo was a strong and subtle piece of acting, touched with that sardonic humour of which he is a master, and informed throughout with the spirit of Italian mediævalism, which, if it does not fit in with the date of the action of the play, is none the less the keynote to the character. After a three months' run, *Cymbeline* has now given place to *Richard III.*, which, in virtue of Sir Henry Irving's striking portrayal of the crookback and of the general excellence of the cast, is likely to hold the boards for a long time to come.

Mr. Tree, tiring of the ever-successful *Trilby*, and yearning for fresh worlds to conquer, turned his attention in the summer to the First Part of *Henry IV.*, in which he naturally played Falstaff, as he had played it in *The Merry Wives*. The most notable performance beside his own was Mr. Lewis Waller's Hotspur, which won the highest praise, and showed the actor's great gifts to the utmost advantage. The whole production was marked by true artistic endeavour, and the same commendation may fairly be given to *As You Like It*, which superseded at the St. James's last month the long-popular *Prisoner of Zenda*. Mr. Alexander makes a brave Orlando, and Miss Julia Neilson's Rosalind, though unequal, is surprisingly good in parts. Mr. Esmond's Touchstone and Mr. Vernon's Jaques are sound, if not particularly striking, and a company numbering many well-known players contributes to a smooth and, in most cases, a quite adequate representation. It is a far cry from Shakspeare to the dramatised novels which have been a feature of the year. The series which

began with *Trilby* (whose creator's death in the autumn called forth on all sides remarkable tributes of sorrow) has continued with Mr. Edward Rose's clever adaptations of Mr. Anthony Hope's *Prisoner of Zenda* and of Mr. Weyman's *Under the Red Robe*, and still later with Mr. Gilbert Parker's version of his own long-winded story, *The Seats of the Mighty*, given in America by Mr. Tree, who is occupying with a Transatlantic tour the interval between his vacation of the Haymarket and his opening at the new "Her Majesty's Theatre" on the other side of the road. *The Prisoner of Zenda* provided Mr. Alexander with an excellent part, showy and not really difficult, and its spectacular side, more perhaps than anything else, ensured it a long run. Mr. Herbert Waring, who shone as the Black Elphberg, made an even greater impression when he appeared as the hero of *Under the Red Robe*, with which Mr. Cyril Maude and Mr. Frederick Harrison began their *régime* at the Haymarket. Every fresh part this actor undertakes seems to show his talent for strong characterisation—whether romantic or realistic—in a more and more favourable light.

A more genuine example of the romantic drama than any of these "novelists' plays" was M. Coppée's *For the Crown*, Englished (with less distinction than one hoped for) by Mr. John Davidson. Mr. Forbes Robertson's Constantine Brancomir only just fell short of being a wholly fine performance; as it was, he divided the chief honours with Mr. Charles Dalton, who, in an easier part, made a very decided mark. Mrs. Patrick Campbell lent a touch of picturesque fascination to a slave girl, having comparatively little to do, and Miss Emery struggled hard, and more than half succeeded, with a character that had little in common with any she had attempted before. Another blank-verse play that deserves passing reference was *The Sin of Saint Hulda*, by Mr. Stuart Ogilvie, known also as the author of a stage perversion of *Hypatia*. The earnestness of this writer is greater than his dramatic ability, and his piece ran but a short time, in spite of fine performances on the part of Miss Kate Rorke, Mr. Waller (for whom this year has been a series of triumphs), and Mr. Cartwright. *Monsieur de Paris*, a single-act tragedy given at the Royalty, deserves mention among romantic productions on account of the fine acting of Miss Violet Vanbrugh. *For the Crown* followed hard upon *Michael and His Lost Angel*, Mr. Jones's piece, which was removed from the bill after a very short run. As the erring priest Mr. Forbes Robertson did all that he could for the play. Miss Marion Terry, who at short notice took up the temptress's rôle, abandoned by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, was out of her element; and,

though she suggested with touching fidelity the better side of a bad nature, she hardly succeeded in presenting such a picture as the author must have intended. The play failed both as drama and as a study of human nature, and the adverse verdicts passed at the time of its production were not revoked when the author issued it in book form. The other productions of the interim management at the Lyceum were a version of Sudermann's *Magda* and a revival of *The School for Scandal*, the latter remarkable for the brilliancy of the cast, if not for the fitness of all the players to the parts assigned them.

Mr. Jones's *Rogue's Comedy* deserved greater success than it had. An interesting and amusing play, it gave Mr. Willard a great opportunity, of which he availed himself to the full. Miss Geraldine Oliffe also created an excellent impression as the "Rogue's" wife, and Mr. Standing presented an inimitable sketch of a weak-natured scoundrel, whose clumsy methods were contrasted with the deft rascality of the principal character. Another interesting play of the same order was *A Woman's Reason*, by Mr. Brookfield and Mr. F. C. Philips. It helped to increase Mr. Waller's reputation, and showed also to good advantage Mr. Coghlan and Miss Florence West. Mrs. Tree was unequal, but played with effect in the scenes that were most congenial to her style. A very young actor, Master Stewart Dawson, gained in this piece a wonderful success by his absolute naturalness and freedom from the distressing affectations and *singeries* of the ordinary "stage-child." The defects of *The Greatest of These*, Mr. Grundy's study in uncharitableness, given by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal at the Garrick, have already been indicated. Far better was *The Late Mr. Castello*, a farcical piece that was admirably interpreted by Mr. Leonard Boyne and Miss Winifred Emery, with perfect sketches furnished by Miss Rose Leclercq and Mr. Maude of characters such as they excel in painting. To the class of plays dealing more or less seriously with modern life belong also *The Haven of Content*, with which Mr. Malcolm Watson broke a silence already too long, and the *Mary Pennington, Spinster*, of Mr. W. R. Walkes, known hitherto mainly as a writer of amusing duologues. The former ought soon to find a place at a London theatre; that so capital a drama should have to be given experimentally, while producers are found for the most inane musical pieces, shows how low an ebb we have reached. The latter introduced to the public a young actress, Miss Mary Jerrold, who gained a surprising success, and evidently has a future before her. It is now being played in America, but has not been seen again in London since its production at a *matinée* in the spring. We may take note

here of *Little Eyolf*, the latest of Dr. Ibsen's studies in morbid psychology, which contains passages more frankly revolting than any of the previous plays. Miss Robins and Miss Achurch, fervent spreaders of the light already, have now been joined by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and their combined talent lent the production some success.

Rosemary, the work of Mr. Louis Parker and Mr. Murray Carson, falls into the category of pleasing fantasies, where also we may place *Love in Idleness*, written by Mr. Parker in conjunction with Mr. E. J. Goodman. *Rosemary* has given Mr. Wyndham such a part as the public delight to see him in, and is admirably acted all round. *Love in Idleness*, slight as it is, affords Mr. Edward Terry plenty of opportunities and his admirers a proportionate amount of fun. The Daly company paid London a shorter visit than usual, and won their usual success with pieces of the well-known and well-liked Daly type. Both in *The Countess Gucki* and in *Love on Crutches* Miss Rehan shone out well, and so they served their purpose.

Of melodrama we have had several excellent specimens. *One of the Best* was a military piece with a "degradation" scene that mightily impressed Adelphi audiences. Mr. Terriss, Mr. Abingdon, and Mr. Harry Nicholls were in this, as in *Boys Together*, the Sudan war drama, which followed it, respectively as noble, as base, and as comic as usual; but it was a shock to find Miss Millward planning wickednesses, and a sigh of relief went up when, in *Boys Together*, she returned to the old familiar path, and was the heroine once again. *A Blind Marriage*, which Mr. Standing gave at the Criterion during Mr. Wyndham's summer holiday, relied, not without success, on several striking situations, and provided Mr. Waring with an effective blind man's part. *The Duchess of Coolgardie*, at Drury Lane, suffered by comparison with the really marvellous productions in this line of Sir Augustus Harris, whose death in the early summer was a decided loss to the theatrical world. Miss Hilda Spong, an Australian actress, who was engaged by Mr. John Coleman for this production, showed that she had talent, and confirmed this impression when she took up a part in *Two Little Vagabonds*, an ingenious, and in places really pathetic, adaptation from the French. In this piece Miss Sydney Fairbrother gained opinions as favourable as those evoked by her clever playing in another melodrama at the Princess's Theatre earlier in the year. Miss Olga Nethersole failed altogether in an attempt to win favour in this country for her Carmen, and Mr. Wilson Barrett's version of *The Manxman*, though much praised on its appearance, seems to have won little popular support. *The*

Sign of the Cross, in which Mr. Barrett has been playing to large and enthusiastic audiences since the beginning of the year, is a judicious blending of popular religious conceptions with crude melodrama.

In the region of farce, *Charley's Aunt*, after its long popularity, has at last been withdrawn, and Mr. Penley has mounted in its stead *Jedbury, Junior*, the work of an American lady, Mrs. Ryley, which was given earlier in the year at Terry's Theatre, then under the management of Mr. F. Kerr. Mr. Bouchier's luck at the Royalty seemed to have deserted him when *The New Baby* followed the fascinating *Chili Widow*, but *The Queen's Proctor* (Mr. Herman Merivale's version of *Les Surprises du Divorce*) brought back success, and proved thoroughly amusing. *A Night Out*, a well-acted French farce of the "screaming" order, has held its place for a long time at the Vaudeville. Mr. Carton's *White Elephant* is a clever farce, and, acted as it is, should have a long run. Miss Compton and Mrs. Charles Calvert are especially good as a good-natured, weak society woman and an old family housekeeper, while Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Cecil Ramsey, and of course Mr. Hawtrey himself, are excellent in a cast that leaves nothing to be desired. *Mr. Martin*, a play from Mr. Hawtrey's own pen, was not a great success. Mr. James Welch's revival of *My Artful Valet* (formerly known as *Gloriana*) showed this clever young actor to the greatest advantage, and *His Little Dodge*, Mr. Alexander's venture at the Royalty, though the plot was particularly unpleasant, gave both to Miss Ellis Jeffreys and to Mr. Fred Terry the chance of showing that they have aptitude for farcical acting.

The traditions of genuine light opera have been well sustained by *The Grand Duke* at the Savoy, and by Professor Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*, while the ever-popular *Mikado* has enjoyed yet another long run. Of the numerous musical farces that have been produced during the year we propose to speak very briefly. The most successful have been *The Geisha* (with pretty music and pretty costumes, but a poor plot poorly told), *My Girl* (a better story but musically weak), and *The Gay Parisienne*. All have strong casts, and care is taken to mount them well; but as entertainments they are little more than passable, while as drama they could only be represented by a minus sign. These three are the best of their kind. The rest is silence.

Portraits.

MR. AND MRS. BANCROFT.

THE *Theatre* this month presents joint portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft. Wherever theatrical art is known, pursued, and understood, the names of this happy and long-united pair awaken pleasantest memories. No two actors have contributed more than the Bancrofts to establish the stage in the position it now occupies among the associated arts, to keep its associations sweet, and its mission high. Those of us who have distant memories recall the evil days on which the drama had one time fallen—days in which, though we could boast the genius of a Webster at the Adelphi, and the varied powers of a Phelps, a Robson, a Buckstone, a Compton, an Emery, and we know not how many more, the public remained indifferent, and management was apt to “spell bankruptcy” in other cases than that of Shakspeare. To lighten and brighten those days, unhappy rather than evil, came a fair and bewitching little actress, born, like Beatrice, under a star that danced. That the winsome and effervescent exponent of burlesque and farce was also an adorable performer in comedy began to be surmised so soon as she had been seen in *Court Favour* and a few other of the two-act pieces then high in public esteem and now wholly forgotten and banished. For a while, however, comedy was only a species of Sunday dish, and the week’s fare consisted of burlesque. So much was this the case that when, in 1865, Miss Wilton, in partnership with Mr. H. J. Byron, began her exemplary and ever-memorable management of the Prince of Wales’s, it was in the burlesque of *La Somnambula, or the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy*, and it was as the Merry Swiss Boy in question that Miss Wilton made her direct appeal to the public.

Six months later the production of Robertson’s *Society* began the series of triumphs which elevated into prominent position the little theatre in Tottenham-street, and wooed back into sympathy with stage aspirations and efforts the world of literature and fashion which had all but forgotten their way to the theatre door. On the marvellous series of Robertsonian plays which led off at the Prince of Wales’s with *Society* and ended with *M.P.*, there is no temptation to dwell. These constitute to the present generation a great portion of stage records, and all except the youngest of playgoers cherish among their plea-

santest associations memories of Maud Hetherington, Mary Netley, Polly Eccles, Rosie Farquhere, Naomi Tighe, and Cecilia Dunscombe. It was while these plays were upsetting all traditions, and startling the sleepy managements of our great theatres, that Mr. Bancroft, whose London career began under Miss Marie Wilton at the opening of the Prince of Wales's, coupled with the position and functions of her manager those of her husband. He, too, had shown the world performances only less welcome than her own, and his Sydney Daryl, afterwards exchanged for Tom Stylus, his Angus Macalister, his Captain Hawtree, his Chevalier Browne, his Jack Poyntz, and his Talbot Piers had raised him high in general estimation. From the moment the entire charge of the mounting and management of the plays came into Mr. Bancroft's unembarrassed hands, what may be called their educational influence asserted themselves. Rival managers who had gazed grudgingly and wonderingly at their "luck" began to read the lesson that was taught them. In place of a scratch collection of actors engaged because they were poor spirited enough to combat no arrogance or pretention of a star, they saw thoroughly competent men assigned to every part; and in place of a conventional and perfunctory performance of a play, with uninterested supernumeraries in the presence of dramatic incidents, seeking indolently for their acquaintance in the gallery, or it might be their admirers in the stalls, they watched a presentation as perfect as art, attention, and perception could make it. That the old managers profited at once cannot be said.

In due course, the Bancrofts proceeded from the Prince of Wales's Theatre to the Haymarket, from the smallest and most youthful comedy house to the largest and oldest. Here they were able to follow out with more courage their experiment, and were no longer embarrassed by a narrow and an inconvenient stage. Here until the period when, covered with honours, and having reaped from the stage, as Scribe from his pen, "fortune and liberty," they retired, the Bancrofts remained. It is more than needless to recapitulate their Haymarket triumphs. As Peg Woffington, Countess Zicka, Mrs. Haysgarth, Mrs. Bancroft achieved successes, no less conspicuous than in her earliest days of management. Mr. Bancroft, on his side, has given us Triplet, Sir George Ormond, and Count Orloff, and we know not how many superb impersonations. It is to Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft that we owe the first suggestion, personally, the best gifts our comedy stage possesses, the *ensemble* of which it was once entirely destitute. If other managements have done more, the Bancrofts led the way.



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MR. & MRS. BANCROFT.

The Round Table.

RICHARD III. ON THE STAGE.

BY FRANCIS ORMATHWAITE.

IT is almost exactly three centuries since the noble historical play just revived by Sir Henry Irving at the Lyceum first saw the light. There is reason to suppose that *Richard III.* dates from 1594 or 1595. In John Weever's *Epigrammes*, apparently written in the latter year, though not published until 1599, reference is made to the principal figure as already well known. "Gulielmum Shakespeare"—so the author calls him—was then scarcely more than thirty; and a careful examination of the piece, whether as to construction, incidents, characters, metre, or diction, will support the conclusion that it is one of his earliest works. Anyway, it was printed in 1597, the publisher being "William Wise, dwelling in Paule's Churchyard, at the signe of the Angell." It is interesting to read the title-page of the book—"The Tragedy of King Richard the Third: containing his Treacherous Plots against his Brother Clarence, the Pittiefull Murther of his Innocent Nephewes, his Tyrannical Vsurpation, with the whole course of his Detested Life and most Deserved Death: as it hath lately beene acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants." At least two dramas on the subject had previously appeared—*Richardus Tertius*, acted at Cambridge in 1583, and *The True Tragedie of Richard III.*, an "enterlude," brought out by the Queen's company of players in or about 1593. Possibly these may have aroused a spirit of emulation in Shakspeare, but it is more probable that he regarded *Richard III.* as a necessary sequel to the Three Parts of *Henry VI.*—that is, of course, if they had already come out, which appears to have been the fact. The play won instant popularity, especially, perhaps, as Burbage, the leading actor of the day, represented the terrible "crookback." It went through several editions, and was frequently glanced at in contemporary literature. "I suspect," writes Malone, "that it was more often represented and more admired than any of Shakspeare's tragedies." Nor is that popularity at all surprising. Intellectual villainy

had never been shown on the stage in so vivid a form. Richard III., as drawn by the young dramatist, is a personage absolutely unique—at once a prince, a tyrant, a warrior, a hypocrite, a conspirator, a lover, a cynic, a sardonic wit, with immense force of mind and character lying behind all he does. Whether the portrait can be accepted as strictly true is quite another matter. Shakspeare did not usually allow himself to be troubled by “historic doubts.” Writing under a stern Tudor sovereign, he was content to adopt and magnify the popular idea as to the last of the Plantagenets, even to the extent of failing to indicate the usurper’s unquestionable capacity as a statesman.

Richard III., in spite of its exceptional force, seems to have dropped out of the list of acted plays as time went on. As far as we are able to say, it was never revived during the forty years that followed the Restoration. Betterton would have been a superb Richard, but neglected the opportunity presented to him by the character. No great power of appreciation, of course, was to be looked for in an actor who, with the originals assumably under his very nose, practically countenanced such wicked mutilations of Shakspeare as Davenant’s *Macbeth*, Tate’s *King Lear*, and Lord Lansdowne’s *Jew of Venice*, in the last of which, by the way, Shylock is turned into a grotesquely “comic” part. Besides passing over Shakspeare’s play, Betterton accepted a poor one on the same story by John Caryl, afterwards secretary to Mary of Modena, a follower of James II. into exile, and the grateful recipient of an earldom in return for his fidelity. Pope inscribed to him *The Rape of the Lock*, the idea of which he is said to have originated. Under the title of *The English Princess, or the Death of Richard III.*, the drama in question was brought out at the Duke of York’s Theatre in 1667, with Betterton as the King, Harris as Richmond, and Smith as Sir William Stanley. The scene is Bosworth-field, the heroine the eldest daughter of Edward IV. More honest than some of his contemporaries, the author steals nothing from Shakspeare, relying in the main upon “plain Holinshed and downright Stow” for his materials. Not a few imaginary love scenes of his invention might have been well spared. Oppressively dull as a whole, the new *Richard* yet had a large measure of success, and was twice printed. Here is Pepys’s notice of the performance:—“A most sad, melancholy play, and pretty good, but nothing eminent in it, as some tragedys are; only little Miss Davis,” much beloved by Charles II., “did dance a jig after the end of the play, and then telling the next day’s play; so that it comes in by force only to please the company to see her dance in boy’s clothes.” “This day,” he adds, “was reckoned by all

people the coldest day that ever was remembered in England ; and, God knows, coals at a very great price."

But the greater *Richard III.* was not to remain wholly in this sort of oblivion. Aspiring to higher parts than fops, Colley Cibber, famous as the author of and a principal player in *Love's Last Shift*, appeared as the crookback at Drury Lane in 1700. Unfortunately, as might have been expected of one living in that age, he was not content to revive it in its original form. He altered it from first to last, usually without the shadow of an excuse. He began with the closing scene (temporarily suppressed by the censor on the ground that it would remind people of the dethroned James II.) of the Third Part of *Henry VI.*, just at the assassination of the King. He left out, among many valuable things, Clarence's dream, the abrupt condemnation of Hastings, and the imprecations by which Margaret of Anjou, "like a modern Cassandra," prepares us for what is to follow. He transposed matter, mutilated or omitted noble lines, dragged in passages from other historical plays from the same hand, and, worse than all, could not resist the temptation to introduce a little claptrap of his own. Of this claptrap two well-known lines—

Off with his head : so much for Buckingham !

and

Conscience avaunt ! Richard's himself again !

may be recalled to mind. Shakspeare's *Richard III.* may not be unsusceptible of improvement in the way of judicious condensation ; but Cibber's version of it, if less outrageous than many such enterprises, can be described only as a reduction of a fine play to the level of vulgar but effective melodrama. As for the acting, Cibber was too exclusively a comedian to do full justice to Richard. He could never be anything except a Sir Novelty Fashion, a Lord Foppington, or other beaux of that stamp. In the words of a possibly prejudiced critic, Downes, he "screamed through four acts without dignity or decency," and even in the heat of battle would call for "a horse" in the affected pronunciation of his day. In spite of all its shortcomings, we have to add, this alteration of *Richard III.* at once took firm possession of the stage—a fact hardly creditable to the taste of either actors or of audiences.

Not a few players of the eighteenth century found in *Richard III.* a means of establishing or extending their fame. Garrick selected it for his first appearance in London, and, easily surpassing a predecessor therein, Quin, made it his own to the end of his career. His remarkable gifts for both tragedy and comedy, always exercised with a greater regard for natural truth than the

stage had previously exhibited, here served him to the best purpose. He seems to have identified himself with almost every phase of the character, and the effect of his closing scenes was simply electrical. How he looked on awakening from his dream is sufficiently proved by Hogarth's familiar picture. In after years Sheridan remarked that the performance, while fine, was "not terrible enough." "God bless me," replied Mrs. Siddons, one of his latest Lady Annes, "what could be more terrible? In one scene I was so much overcome by the fearful expression on his face that I forgot my instructions. I was recalled to myself by a look of reproof, which I never remember without a tremor." On the whole, we cannot doubt that his best biographer, Mr. Fitzgerald, is justified in describing the performance "a miracle of acting." Barry had the temerity to enter the lists against Garrick in the character, but was found "deficient in all points." Henderson and John Kemble had better success, though a good deal too stiff and stately in their style for the part. Both, however, were to be eclipsed here by George Frederick Cooke, who, if a little rough, revelled in the caustic element of the part. His death-scene is described on all hands as particularly fine. He "fell like the ruin of a state, like a king with his regalia about him."

Of all bygone Richards, we may be sure, Edmund Kean was the most perfect, original, and brilliant. "He almost makes me forget my old master, Garrick," said Bannister. Here, as in *Othello*, *Shylock*, *Iago*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, and other parts, he set competition at defiance. One feature of the performance was its general elevation of tone. "He showed," writes Mrs. Richard Trench, "that Gloster possessed a mine of humour and pleasantry, with all the graces of high breeding grafted on strong and brilliant intellect. He carries one's views backwards and forwards as to the character, instead of confining them, like other actors, within the limits of the present hour; and he gives breadth of colouring to the part which strongly excites the imagination. He gave probability to the drama by showing the favourable light of Richard's higher qualities on the character. . . . He reminded me constantly of Buonaparte—that restless quickness, that Catiline inquietude, that fearful somewhat resembling the impatience of a lion in his cage. I would willingly have heard him repeat his part that evening." "His courtship scene with Lady Anne," says Hazlitt, "was an admirable exhibition of smooth and smiling villainy. The progress of wily adulation, of encroaching humility, was finely marked throughout by the action, voice, and eye. He seemed, like the first tempter, to approach his prey certain of the event, and

as if success had smoothed the way before him. . . . Mr. Kean's attitude in leaning against the side of the stage before he comes forward in this scene was one of the most graceful and striking we remember to have seen; it would have done for Titian to paint." Indeed there can be little or no doubt that he met all the requirements of his task, trying albeit they are. Now and then there was a daring innovation, as when, on the eve of the battle, he stood in a reverie before his tent, drew figures on the ground with the point of his sword, and suddenly recovered himself with that "good-night." Touches like these, according to Doran, were responded to by acclamations such as are awarded to none but the great masters of the art. Three lines in Byron's *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*—

Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
That earth is now as fell

were suggested by the picture. Mr. Kean, Hazlitt adds, "gave to all the busy scenes of the play the greatest animation and effect. He filled every part of the stage. The concluding scene, in which he is killed by Richmond, was the most brilliant. He fought like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he slid, with his hands stretched out, after his sword was taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power." "Who that ever saw," Fanny Kemble asks, "will ever forget the fascination of his dying eyes as Richard? The wondrous power of his look seemed yet to avert the uplifted arm of Richmond."

In the first quarter of the present century, with its striking revival of poetry and true criticism, it was inevitable that Cibber's mutilation of *Richard III.* should be pointedly denounced. Hazlitt spoke of it as a "miserable medley," and writers hardly less eminent followed in his wake. In 1871, at Covent Garden, Macready, by no means an ineffective Richard, restored a good deal of Shakspeare's text, but lacked the courage to dispense with what he allows to be the "coarse jests and *ad captandum* speeches of Cibber."

In his own words, "the experiment was partially successful, only partially." Phelps—his disciple, imitator, and successor—might have said the same of a revival of the true play at Sadler's Wells. His influence there notwithstanding, the audience would not put up with the loss of the time-honoured bombast. Charles Kean, when all-powerful at the Princess's, gave Cibber the preference. The original text, he said in the playbill, had been "practically declared by the greatest ornaments of

the drama to be less fitted in its integrity for representation on the stage than almost any other generally acted play of the great poets." As observed by Cibber, that travesty had been "pronounced one of the most admirable and skilful instances of dramatic adaptation ever known." Garrick and other great actors had adopted it, and had associated with it the traditionary admiration of the public for them as Richard. It "evinced great dramatic judgment and a consummate acquaintance with scenic effects," and there could be no doubt that a careful comparison of the original and the revised tragedy left no choice to the masters I have named. Nearly all the dramatic critics of Kean's time were at one with him on the points. In *Their Majesties' Servants*, brought out in 1864, Doran had nothing but praise for the alteration; and another expert in the gay science writing three or four years afterwards, said that until the veneration for Shakspeare's text became far more intense and general than it then was—until, in fact, the public began to demand the resuscitation of Fortinbras in *Hamlet*—Cibber's version "would remain the stock piece of the stage."

Memorable in the history of *Richard III.* was to be the London season of 1876-7. Barry Sullivan, an actor of the "robustious" school, appeared at Drury Lane, according to Cibber, as the Crookback. Four months later, at the Lyceum, Mr. Henry Irving, in no wise daunted by Charles Kean's dictum, restored the original text, which was hailed with delight on nearly every side. Nor is that fact astonishing in view of his impersonation of Glo'ster. I saw it again and again, always with increasing interest and admiration. Especially was I struck by the *princely* bearing and tone that marked the whole performance. Mr. Irving, while constrained by his author to come forward as "deformed," never forgot that Richard was a Plantagenet. The idea conveyed in three lines, omitted by the ingenious Cibber—

I was born so high,
Our aiery finedeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun—

was realised throughout with full effect. Someone has described this Richard as "splendidly Satanic." I echo the phrase, particularly on remembering the opening soliloquy, the wooing of Lady Anne, the interview with the young princes, the outburst against Hastings, and the profound dissimulation in the presence of the Lord Mayor. One of the most finely-imagined pictures I have seen on the stage was that in which, after the acceptance of the crown, Mr. Irving, from behind the convenient shelter of that prayer-book, darted a triumphant look at Buckingham. Of the tent scene, I must not forget to say, he gave us an entirely new

reading. Richard went to battle as became a warrior, but not without a presentiment of his approaching end. Unlike the old barnstorm actors, he presented himself in a despairing mood, if not exactly conscience-stricken.

I have not that alacrity of spirit

Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have.

In uttering the lines—

There is no creature love me,

And if I die no soul shall pity me—

he dropped his hands, as it were unconsciously, about a crucifix on the table in the tent—a master touch. The critic of the *Globe* said that “from the first scene, with its superb monologue, to the last, in which the victorious host of Richmond gather round the body of the fallen tyrant, the applause was enthusiastic and all but continuous.” We have no sort of doubt that that applause will be repeated for many weeks to come, whatever criticism may say, and rightly say, about Sir Henry Irving’s acting on some unessential points.

THE BERNHARDT FÊTE.

BY W. MORTON FULLERTON.

TWO acts and a prologue of a play in three acts given on December 9th, in Paris, *La Journée de Sarah*, have excited, owing to the co-operation of the ubiquitous telegraph, the curiosity of a sympathetic planet. It is rare that a first performance arouses so lively an interest. The great tragedian who played the title-rôle, Mme. Bernhardt, has never displayed a more facile plasticity of temperament, nor ever obtained more merited recognition of her chameleonic, and frequently unique, qualities. Everything concerning this Paris *première* is remarkable. Yet, in spite of the incomparable wealth of comment which it evoked, it is doubtful whether ever any play has been so unsatisfactorily reported. There has been an all but universal insistence on certain accessories of the piece, and on the interest of the central figure. Even the actress who played the rôle of Sarah has been all but apotheosized. Public curiosity has gone quite unslaked, on the other hand, as to the real nature of the plot, and particularly as to the reason why the third act was not given.

So much of the classic French theatre, as regards the conventions of dramatic form, is borrowed from the traditions and customs of the theatres of later Greece and later Rome, that the presence of a prologue in a modern French piece need not really have come as the surprise that it was. This prologue of the

Journée de Sarah was given on the morning of December 9th. The *Figaro* published a statement signed by the great actress herself, announcing with contagious eloquence and adequate clearness, *urbi et orbi*, the claims of Mme. Bernhardt to enlightened applause when in a few hours she should appear in her new rôle in *La Journée de Sarah*. And no piece certainly ever more required a prologue. The first act, which opens upon an immense banquetting hall, where already some hundreds of ladies and gentlemen in evening dress, although it is the noon hour, are seen watching a slim and beautiful woman, Sarah (Mme. Bernhardt)

“Descendre pale un grand escalier clair”

on the arm of an old gentleman with a distinguished air (M. Victorien Sardou), nowhere affords the spectator, it should be said, sufficient indication as to the rôles of the play. There is immense applause as the lady takes her place at the centre of a table loaded with plate and flowers; there is, for a full and somewhat monotonous hour, a confused hum of the mingled sounds of voices, of clinking culinary utensils, and of the hurrying feet of waiters; there is, in a word, a singularly realistic representation of a banquetting scene; but the words uttered during this original almost pantomimic act are surprisingly few. The chief actor, M. Sardou, rises at the close of the banquet, and lifts his glass “to the great and good Sarah” (Mme. Bernhardt), and Sarah responds softly with a triple: “*Merci, merci, merci.*” But this is all. Evidently the first act offers data too vague for an average audience always curious about the plot. It is not enough to know only that the heroine of the piece is “great and good.” *Ça ce n'est pas du théâtre.* And it would be too long to wait until the second act to know why she is “great and good.” The author anticipated this criticism, and, preferring to preserve the pantomimic brilliancy of the first act untarnished, has introduced into the prologue such information as was required to render intelligible and significant the superb scene of the banquetting hall. The prologue, therefore, in the present piece is no mere literary affectation. It is integrally connected with the organic life of the play.

This prologue, I hasten to add, is a masterpiece of dramatic argument, and of clear and forcible exposition. Here, indeed, on the best authority, that of the heroine of the piece herself, one learns why she is “great and good,” and why she eventually obtains the canonization of the second act, when seated, once again on a raised dais, but this time alone, she receives the homage of the poets and playwrights and academicians. In the lyric autobiography which is this *Figaro* article, Mme. Bernhardt,

who is so soon to play the rôle of Sarah in the *Journée de Sarah*, tells the reader what she has accomplished in the two hemispheres, which, for her, form the one cosmic sphere of her art. Such incidents in her past as will contribute to the enlightenment of the ladies and gentlemen who have subscribed forty francs to attend the *première* of her new piece are here presented with much art. This prologue has been transmitted throughout the world, and I need not dwell upon it. To one passage in it only I allude as being a singularly happy one, and one to which I shall return briefly in a moment. Mme. Bernhardt speaks of Sarah as having been in barbarous realms the witting missionary of the French tongue; of having served, more effectually than all the official alliances for the propagation of the language, more than all the devoted Jesuit priests from Hudson's Bay to Pondicherry, to familiarise the avid foreign ear with the French idiom. This, which is in itself a remarkable observation, and is based on the fact that Sarah has travelled over every sea as an actress fleeing from one city of refuge to another, is recorded in anticipation of the third act of the play which on Wednesday, December 9th, was omitted. Yet the observation was, even in itself, an extremely curious one, and while its significance would have been seen to be enhanced had the third act been played, it still remains of the highest interest.

The first two scenes of the second act are exceedingly disparate, but both contribute logically to the same end. They lead directly up to the glorification scene of the same act which has so unaccountably seemed to some critics the natural *dénouement* of the piece. In these scenes Sarah (Mme. Bernhardt) impersonates with unrivalled power two of the contrasted characters which, as was stated in the prologue, she has represented throughout the world. The prologue announced to the audience a portion of what Sarah's past had been, only hinting at why she is what the first act categorically affirmed her to be, namely, "great and good." The first two scenes of the second act, accepting this judgment, illustrated, and, such was the actress's power, proved, why Sarah had merited these serene adjectives. In playing, with scarcely a pause between them, the second act of *Phèdre* and the fourth of *Rome Vaincue*, she aroused such applause as is idiomatically and legitimately described as frenetic, affirming with prodigious emphasis her incomparable talent. These two short acts amply sufficed as sanction of the admirably measured utterance of the male protagonist of the piece, M. Sardou, when he described Sarah in the banqueting scene as "great and good." A great London newspaper has suggested that, after all, there are limita-

tions in Mme. Bernhardt's art; that she has never sought to render, because apparently she has never felt, the more normal, the nobler, the less complicated emotions of woman-kind. There may be a truth in this; but the French theatre is not as the English, and certain critics would seem to have forgotten the great tragedian's success in many a play of Dumas fils, in *Gismonda*, and in other rôles besides, when she is not obliged, as M. Rostand says in the sonnet scene of the second act, to *brandir un fer*, but only to stir our souls to tears, or to *porter un lys*. No, if limitations there are, they are not perceived in France, where perspicacity in matters of art is not "sicklied-o'er with the pale cast of thought," as in English communities, but deep-diving and fine, and where artistic sensibility is as genuinely æsthetic and as direct almost as in Japan.

The truth just stated, indeed, may perhaps be considered as the chief "moral" of *La Journée de Sarah*, but this moral would have been generally visible had the third act not been omitted. Up to the third scene of the second act it is Sarah, and, for the most part, Sarah only that we see. Here in the last scene of the second act, which takes place at the Renaissance Theatre, a host of other actors suddenly invade the stage, together with a large number of very distinguished supernumeraries. They represent poets, academicians, student corporations, and playwrights, and one after another they flourish before the great and good Sarah on her throne, *Reine de l'attitude et princesse des gestes*, their pretty compliments of sonnets. The idea is obvious. It is the Magi at the feet of the Great and the Good. It is the ultimate reward of genius and of kindness. It is the apotheosis of the actress; and never has Mme. Bernhardt played more sympathetically or with a more consummate art than she did in this trying rôle of Sarah, who is the unembarrassed, yet exquisitely palpitating, object of universal adulation. Here, at least, is a rôle which destroys the entire argument of the great London newspaper. Nothing, even in the English sense, could be more womanly, nothing more delicately shaded and refined than Mme. Bernhardt's conception of this rôle. To the present writer it seems her greatest triumph.

And upon this scene the curtain fell. There is, however, still another act, the decoration act, which should have been given, and which Mme. Bernhardt, it is understood, would have preferred to any of the others. To my mind the play lacks clearness without it. It is wanting in logic, and also even in purely dramatic power. The prologue, moreover, as has already been explained, was written in special anticipation of that act, and what I have called the chief "moral" of the play, namely, the

superior sensibility of the French in artistic matters, is by no means, without this final act, sufficiently indicated. Sarah certainly should be decorated. After the article in the *Figaro*, showing how well the great actress has deserved of her country, it can hardly be doubted that such is Mme. Bernhardt's opinion, and such certainly is the opinion of all the actors in the *Journée de Sarah*. It is not at present known whether this third act will ever be given. It was suppressed at this first performance by *la censure*, owing to a curious passage in which M. Meline, who plays the rôle of Prime Minister, says tartly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs: "No, the precedent is one for which I refuse to be responsible. I shall never decorate an actress. *Elles auraient des moyens trop faciles.*" In spite of this refusal, however, the act finishes with the decoration of Sarah. All lovers of dramatic art will await impatiently the revival of *La Journée de Sarah* in conditions permitting the presentation of an unbowdlerised text.

MR. BERNARD SHAW'S TONE.

BY HENRICUS.

THERE is something rather querulous in Mr. Shaw's assertion that, even after twenty years, London has hardly caught his tone. We had not thought to find so harsh an *intransigent*, whose highest aim is to be in English art-matters what Henri Rochefort was in the Parisian politics of bygone days, whining to a representative of the tiny *Chap-Book* about the failure of his fascinations. Did chained Rochefort, think you, take the warders of New Caledonia into his confidence? Did he shed exiled tears on the shoulder of any English journalist? Not he! *Voyu peut-être*, he was yet a man and a patriot, even to the end. His love never faltered for that city which drove him forth, and has now received him, with tardy justice, to its bosom. What an example Henri is to George! George is suffered to remain in our midst. No gyves constrain the nimbleness of George's ankles. If he shout and shake his fist at us, we do listen to him with all respect. If he glare at us through grotesque masks, and cut abominable capers, we do not avert our eyes. We shudder lest he hurt himself when he claps his taut knuckles on the marble brow of Shakspeare. And yet he must needs whine about our unkindness for the benefit of the first American interviewer who comes by. Fie, George!

Were we but passively indifferent, George should think himself lucky. But, in point of fact, we really do take some interest

in him, some kindly interest. It may be that we are forced to do so. His tone is so very loud that we could not, even if we would, help catching it. No complement of cotton-wool could make any of our ears impervious to his staccato. And so we resign ourselves to audience. But to assert that we cannot understand his meaning were an undeserved slight upon our brains. For, surely, there is nothing very mysterious about George. He seems to us the most intelligible of creatures. He does not lull our perception with any vague literary graces. His style is as bald as the constant use of a type-writer can make it. Nor are we, in examining him, baulked by any of those crusted involutions of mind which make another satirist, Dean Swift, and another prophet, Thomas Carlyle, the despair of all psychologists. His satire is as simple as a Dublin carman's. We often laugh, because it is often wittily expressed, but we do not shake our heads and throw up our hands, protesting that we really cannot plumb the depths of a gentleman who asserts that Shakspeare was an ass or that Mr. Bouchier is fat. As a prophet, he may possibly have frightened one or two nervous persons, who compare him, in awe-stricken whispers, to a wolf in Jaeger-clothing. But for us, for the community, his prophecies are not very impressive. The prophet who stalked London during the plague was not less veiled than he. George's prophecies, moreover, do not come true, for all his nakedness.

"I am an Atheist!" he has shouted from many a little platform. Far be it from us to convert him. "But I go to church!" he has shouted in the *Savoy*. Well, well, well, but there is nothing strange in that. George is but one of many infidels who can understand the charm of faith and worship. Most infidels, indeed, can understand it. "I am a Socialist!" shouts George, and then, Sir William Harcourt's famous generalisation having rather discounted such a confession, he adds that, as such, he is "a ridiculous fellow." But we never denied George his sense of humour. And, surely, even the dullest man could not but smile when he is assailed by the Babel-cries of a Socialist Congress. Nor, again, are we dumbfounded by George's asceticism. He need not toy so ostentatiously with a tomato while we invade the hissing joint. We think it very sensible of him not to eat meat, if he finds he is better without it. Were his ostentation intended to convert us to a similar self-denial, not merely to startle us with a doubtful eccentricity, we might find it more pardonable than we do. The beggar in the street is not more importunate than George in his proclamation of an empty stomach, nor the schoolboy prouder of having smoked a cigar than George of never having smoked one.

We should hesitate, for reasons of delicacy, to accuse most people of that fault peculiar to most people, vulgarity. They would be hurt and angry. But, in saying that George is often vulgar, we are only repeating one of his favourite *clichés*, and we wonder why he should pride himself on so common a fault. When he asserts that he is inhuman, we are inclined to think he is merely posing. We find an average amount of rough humanity in his writing, and, when he tells an interviewer that his father was "the most unlucky, incompetent, and impecunious of mortals," we see no reason to suppose that George was not a dutiful and affectionate son. The nervous few, to whom we have already referred, are apt to encourage him, by their terror, to insist upon his own inhumanness. Indeed, they sometimes mistake for inhumanness what is indeed the most common-place honesty. When George saw fit to attack the Lyceum production of *Cymbeline*, one of them cried out with a loud voice that this was the man from whom Sir Henry Irving had accepted a play! Thus was George's virtue, being taken for wickedness, its own reward.

The up-to-date assertion of egoism is, we need scarcely point out, the tone which London is supposed not to have caught. There is nothing remarkable in being an egoist, and George is chiefly remarkable for his constant glorying in that estate. There are many men of far stranger personality, of far subtler intellect, who will die obscure. But we do not therefore ignore the good points that George does undoubtedly possess. He has a keen, facile mind, an untiring interest in various subjects, and, above all, much genuine humour. Though he has no culture, he is exceedingly well informed. Though he has no literary style, and though he often writes quite serious nonsense, he is always readable, whether he be writing of pictures, books, plays, music, or social science. His personality is less lurid than he supposes, but we are more than tolerant of his journalism. In fact, he has really nothing to complain of in our attitude. He must make no more complaints.

MUSICAL CRITICISM AND CRITICS.

BY W. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

UNDER the pseudonym of "Roentgen Ray," which is distinctly suggestive of uncompromising revelation, a writer who expressly disclaims any professional status or authority, either as musician or critic, has given to publicity a pamphlet in which, dealing with the musical critics of our contemporary press, he puts forward certain accusations and insinuations which, in my humble opinion, should not be passed over in scornful silence or contemptuously "whistled down the wind" by the

particular class of journalists—I admit that it is numerically a small one—which consists of men who, being professional critics, are also well versed in the theory and practice of the musical art. My claim to belong to that class is one that will scarcely be disputed by Mr. “Ray” or by anyone adequately acquainted with the “inside track” of English journalism throughout the past thirty years. From a purely chronological point of view I believe myself to be at the present moment the *sous-doyen* of the metropolitan musical critics, their *doyen* being my dear friend and colleague, Joseph Bennett, whose lead I respectfully follow in energetically repudiating the baseless assertions and inferences of an anonymous amateur. Mr. “Ray,” in the first place, denounces the London musical critics of the present day as incompetent. According to him, their ignorance of the art which they presume to expound to the “profane vulgar” is only equalled by their presumption and self-sufficiency. He pronounces their criticisms to be so radically worthless as to be undeserving of serious attention on the part of rising or struggling young musicians. The absolute lack of judicial or opinionative value characterising these journalistic utterances he attributes to the circumstance—derived, apparently, from his own “inner consciousness”—that musical criticism is governed by trade considerations, and that newspaper proprietors require critics in their employ, when analysing compositions or describing performances, to keep those considerations steadfastly in view. Referring to the opening count of this sweeping indictment, in the cool, grave, ironical tone of which he is a master, Mr. Bennett has already pointed out that the latest self-instituted censor of current musical criticism is avowedly “an amateur musician, or amateur critic, or both in one, advising and sitting in judgment upon the professional.” What special qualification has Mr. “Ray” for discussing professional criticism? “After reading his remarks,” observes Mr. Bennett, “I am sorrowfully driven to conclude that he has none whatever.” Calmly and convincingly repudiating the charge of venal time-serving brought against critical craftsmen in general by the author of “Criticism,” the musical mouth-piece of the *Daily Telegraph*, who has served many editors and contributed to many journals, declares that in every case he has had an absolutely free hand as far as all matters of opinion have been concerned. “Mr. Ray,” he satirically adds, “may depend upon it that the miserable condition of musical criticism is not due to the cause he has discovered, but to the ineptitude and general shortcomings of us who are critics. Of course this is a humiliating statement; but if Mr. Ray’s diagnosis be correct, it also must be true. There remains to us the comfortable

reflection that as Mr. Ray is wrong on one point, he may be mistaken on another—even upon the question whether present-day musical criticism be hopelessly bad or moderately good.” At any rate, it has never, within Mr. Bennett’s remembrance, been more honest or more free than it is now.

That is my firm belief, based upon personal experiences which coincide exactly with those recorded by Mr. Bennett. Forty-two years have elapsed since I was first employed by the editors of two London “weeklies” to criticise music and musicians in their columns, and I can positively aver that, from 1854 to 1896, not one editorial suggestion ever reached me that was calculated to bias my opinion either with respect to composer or executant. Moreover, I feel convinced that the influence of journalistic criticism, as applied to music and its interpreters, vocal and instrumental, has largely and legitimately increased since the expiration of the period during which English dilettanti, amateurs, and uninstructed music-lovers shaped their judgment in conformity with the published pronouncements of H. F. Chorley, Grüneisen, J. W. Davison, H. S. Edwards, and W. A. Barrett. I knew all these critics well, three of them intimately. Without exception, they were erudite musicians and honourable men, who regarded their calling as a priesthood, and would have endured the torment rather than have said or written anything that they did not believe to be true. Their literary capacity was far above the average. Davison and Barrett, in particular, were stylists of the first flight, whose English, in its strength and elegance, was unsurpassable. But they were also enthusiastic musical specialists, and as such intensely prejudiced. All they had in common was the worship of the old gods, Bach and Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, and a hearty admiration of Felix Mendelssohn, deeply enhanced, in the cases of Chorley and Davison, by personal affection for the most genial and fascinating composer of the century. Chorley, however, was utterly insensible to the beauties of Schumann’s music, and for many years strenuously opposed its introduction into this country. Wagner was even more repugnant to him than Schumann; and he materially retarded the acceptance by the British public of the great Saxon’s works, in which infelicitous achievement he was vigorously aided by Davison, who shared his inflexible objections to the compositions of Schumann, Liszt, and Brahms, and was, moreover, on his own account, one of Charles Gounod’s most uncompromising opponents. Neither Grüneisen nor Barrett could stomach the Wagnerian theory and methods. Song-plays, tone-pictures, and inorganic melodies were to them mere abominations. Yet they were perfectly conscientious critics,

all the four, only distrustful and resistant of the so-called "advanced school." Chorley could no more help hating Schumann and Wagner than he could resist the temptation of wearing a pink waistcoat at a musical evening party. *Faust* and *Mireille* were as offensive to Davison as the suggestion that he might once in a way do well to go to bed before five a.m. Grüneisen was a rigid musical conservative, whose love of symmetrical "form" in the Divine Art was so engrossing that he set up Bach and Handel as idols worthy of almost exclusive adoration, regarded the romantic school with suspicion and dislike, and took grave exception to the "phantasms overladen with difficulty"—I remember his very words—of Beethoven's last five P.F. sonatas, although the earlier works of the unapproachable Rhenish Master had no more fervent admirer than Grüneisen. Throughout the first moiety of the present reign conservatism marked the leading English musical critics for its own, with the exception of H. Sutherland Edwards, who was a moderate Progressist when I was first admitted to his friendship in 1865, and whose catholicity of taste has since then steadfastly developed into full acceptance of all that is beautiful, irrespective of mere "form" or canonical traditions. The motto of his critical contemporaries—including the venerable and picturesque Lincoln, a sound musician and conscientious journalist—should have been *stare super antiquas vias*; for they could see no merit in "new departures," and were resolutely averse from every kind of innovation. What they did not choose to understand—and in that direction it was not capacity that they lacked, but pliability of will—they did not like. They lost no opportunity of inveighing in print against their bugbears, among whom were to be reckoned several of the noblest composers of our age, and, as the power of shaping public opinion in this country was all but exclusively in their hands, they actually succeeded in keeping works of supreme value out of our opera-houses and concert-rooms for years after those very compositions had achieved enormous and well-deserved popularity in Germany and Belgium, and even in stagnant Italy and reactionary France.

Apart from considerations of mere literary quality, in respect to which the newspaper-reading public is quite competent to judge for itself, I ask any level-headed composer, virtuoso, or dilettante if the present standard of English musical criticism is not higher and wholesomer than that which obtained during the period above referred to—say, from 1850 to 1875? The native British critics of to-day attached to our great journals and weekly periodicals may not—with one or two shining exceptions—be as profound or finished musical scholars as were their

predecessors ; but they are distinctly less dogmatical and prejudiced, more open-minded and tolerant, more receptive of novelty, and less confident in the assumed infallibility of their own judgment. As far as I know, they are not subjected to any pressure on the part of their employers, and maintain their independence of opinion with unflinching uprightness. The only wilfully mendacious and utterly venal musical critic with whom I have come into contact in this country since "the old order changed, giving way to new," was a foreigner of extraordinary ability, one of the most bare-faced blackmailers and outrageous scamps that ever disgraced any honourable profession or calling. He died in poverty and exile instead of in a felon's cell, which, had law and justice been convertible terms, would assuredly have been the scene of his euthanasia. Since he vanished from London, whirled away by a very tempest of public scorn and reprobation, no member of our little craft has evinced any disposition to emulate his vices.

Finally, it is absurd and *oisif* to stigmatise musical critics as incompetent because, for the most part, they have undergone no special preparation for the *métier* they practise. They are journalists, and, as such, "born, not made." Where is the English journalist of any eminence who has been trained for his career in a School of Journalism? Among my many colleagues I do not know one who has not been, like myself, "something else" before he took to writing regularly for the press. Some started as soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, or civil servants ; some as clergymen or college tutors, barristers or doctors, schoolmasters or commercial employés. Thus, and not as journalistic apprentices, have they qualified for admission to the Fourth Estate. Among the musical critics with whom I am personally acquainted are ex-organists, ex-choristers, and ex-students at one or other of our endowed musical colleges. One is a clever composer, another a sentimental poet, and a third the English equivalent of a "stickit minister." These men, in my opinion, have had as good a training for their speciality as that which any other average journalist has been submitted to. Of course, being human, they disagree. How about lawyers, divines, and medical men?

THE READY-MADE CRITIC.

BY HENRY ELLIOTT.

THERE has been some discussion of late as to what constitutes, technically, an actor. One would have thought that the subject was not open to controversy, but apparently it is.

The moving spirits of the Actors' Association have displayed a praiseworthy desire to (what we may call) regularise "the profession," of which the chief bane has so long been the fact that its *personnel* is constantly being increased from without—from the ranks not only of the amateur, but of the entirely useless. Could not the profession be made more of a close borough than it is? Could not some check be put upon the influx into it of the non-gifted and uneducated? Could not some sort of credentials be demanded from those who desire to make their living by the practice of the histrionic art? These questions, I believe, have been entertained and considered by the Association and its leaders, and I hope that even yet they may have some practical and successful issue.

Meanwhile, the expressed desire of the Association to regularise the profession has been met, in at least one quarter, by gibes and jeers. "You call yourselves a profession"—actors have virtually been told—"but you are nothing of the kind. A cleric, a doctor, a lawyer, even a painter and a draughtsman, must have a definite amount of study and training before he can practise his art; the first three of these must even pass certain examinations, and have their competency certified by authority, before they are permitted to turn their acquired knowledge to account. But who dreams of asking an actor for his certificates or his diplomas? All that is asked of him is, 'What have you done already?' and sometimes (especially in the case of the female actor) not even that is asked. Wholly without impediment is the entrée to the histrionic 'profession.' Some come in on the strength of a pleasing face, some on the strength of a taking wardrobe, some on the strength of possessing money wherewith to start a company and a tour. A novice announces herself for a certain rôle—and behold! she is a member of the 'profession.' An amateur pays for the privilege of enacting a certain part—and, lo! he can say he is an actor. Assuredly, that man or that woman who has once received remuneration for a performance on the boards has an unquestionable right to describe himself or herself as a player."

Now, it is not my business or desire, on the present occasion, to combat in any way these propositions. They, or their equivalent, or something very like them, have been put forward by a newspaper writer; and that is the point to which I wish to draw attention. This cynical description of the profession of acting proceeds from one who, I believe, has been an actor himself, and is likewise a playwright, but with whom I have to deal here in his character of journalist. To him, and those like him, I propose to apply the *tu quoque* argument, which, I trust, will be

in this case identical with "the retort courteous." "You say that acting is not a profession, because it necessitates no preliminary study and is in no respect governed by authority. Well, then, is Journalism—your own calling—a profession? I am not aware that a man or woman has to undergo any special training, or stand any examination-tests, before being admitted to work upon a newspaper. In truth, some of your brethren make a boast of the fact that journalism takes its *bien* where it finds it—that, so long as the article or report is good in itself, you do not care by whom it is provided, even if by the veriest amateur and outsider. Actors, you say, become artists by sheer experience. It is by experience, I take it, that newspaper men become journalists. They get 'on' to a journal somehow, and, having once put their foot up on the ladder, essay to climb. The so-called 'profession' of journalism is (like a certain pew-system) 'free and open.' A man sends a contribution to a newspaper; it is accepted, and, if he perseveres in that sphere of labour, he is a journalist—without certificate, without diploma, very possibly without a University degree."

And that is the point on which I wish to dwell and to insist. A so-called "journalist" is ready-made. Directly a newspaper proprietor or editor has given him employment, he is "a member of the profession." His case, that is to say, is on all-fours with that of the actor. The young histrionic aspirant, as soon as he has received a part to play, is a player; if preliminary knowledge, duly certified by his superiors, is to be demanded from him, why not from the body of men whose duty it is to criticise him in the columns of the press?

Let us consider for a moment the genesis of the dramatic critic. What made him a "critic," and gave him the authority of one? Was he chosen because he had long been a student of the drama and of its history, not only in England but in America and on the Continent and in distant times? Was he selected because of his familiarity with the text (and the criticism thereon) of the literature of the English and foreign stage? Was he appointed because of his intimate acquaintance with the acting of our era—say, from the younger Kean, or Phelps at least, downwards? Is every dramatic critic necessarily not only an ordinary well-educated man but also an expert in this one direction? Could he pass a stringent examination either in the classics, or in the varying fortunes of the Drama? Does he know even the difference between the "dramatic" and the "theatrical"? Has he even a rudimentary acquaintance with the more obvious laws of dramatic construction?

In not many cases could these questions be answered in the

affirmative. I do not say we have no learned and expert critics; as a matter of fact, we have a few such in our midst. But how many of the existing writers about the theatre were originally engaged for press work because they were learned and expert? An actor, however industrious, thoughtful, careful, penetrating, has no guarantee whatever that his newspaper censors will be competent and trustworthy. It may be said that the average stage production does not call for the possession, in the commentators on it, of an abnormal amount of information and judgment. What special requirements (it may be urged) are needed for the appraisal of such pretty and amusing, but essentially light and trivial, things as *The Circus Girl*? Must one have "studied" and been "examined" before one can be trusted to venture an opinion upon Little Tich in *Lord Tom Noddy*? Is "dramatic criticism," after all, so very arduous and distinguished a function? Can it not be exercised by somebody less imposing than a Hazlitt or a George Henry Lewes? To all of which queries I reply that in the instance even of the slightest and most frivolous of stage productions a certain command of technique must be exhibited, and that a knowledge of that technique ought certainly to be enjoyed and utilised by the public appraisers of such efforts. And, moreover, there are occasions, such as the adequate staging of Shakspearean plays, on which the critic, to be competent and acceptable, ought to be at least the equal, if not the superior, of the entrepreneur in his familiarity with the details of dramatic and theatrical lore.

Yet what is the fact? How many of our dramatic critics—in London, to say nothing of the provinces—are admitted authorities on Shakspeare, or, indeed, on any classic English dramatist? Most of them, I grant you, are clever enough to "get up" a certain amount of information if sufficient notice is accorded them; it is, indeed, somewhat ludicrous now and then to note the ingenious fashion in which some solemnly unpack the erudition they have so recently amassed. In time, the most ignorant of critics manages to pick up a measure of working knowledge, which enables him to rub along without actually "giving himself away." In time, experience comes to all, and with it a faculty not only for obtaining knowledge but for concealing ignorance. It is diverting to watch the critical neophyte—it may be a briefless barrister or a graduate fresh from the University—gingerly picking his way through the difficulties that surround the gentlemen who undertake to pronounce upon the theatre. How carefully he scans the work of his elders and betters, how sedulously he utilises the scraps of fact and of opinion he is able to collect!

· Training for actors, certificates for actors, forsooth—why should such things be demanded from them in all cases when they are not demanded in all cases from their journalistic censors? If the possession of a rôle is sufficient to make a man professionally an actor, the acquisition of a theatre ticket, handed to him by an editor, makes a man (or boy) professionally a critic. On this point let actors and journalists cry quits. If acting is not a profession, neither is newspaper criticism.

THE KING OF COMIC OPERA IN AMERICA.

BY STEPHEN FISKE.

AS the producer and the comedian of comic operas, Mr. Francis Wilson has won a unique position in America. If we could imagine Mr. J. L. Toole bringing out comic operas in a style as magnificent as that at the Savoy, and there playing and singing the principal comedy parts in them, he would be to England what Mr. Wilson is to the United States. Mr. Wilson has received several flattering offers to appear in London, but, like Mr. Toole, he has learned that a comedian belongs to his own country and is best appreciated and rewarded there. Mr. Wilson was born of a Quaker family, at Philadelphia, in 1854. As a boy he divided his time between school and jig-dancing, and he made his first appearance in a negro minstrel troupe as Master Johnny in the old farce of *The Virginia Mummy*. Until 1877 he remained a minstrel and variety performer; but all the while he nourished dramatic aspirations, and whenever opportunity offered he studied the work of such tragedians as E. L. Davenport and Barry Sullivan. Of the latter he says: “Mr. Barry Sullivan’s Richard III. was a revelation to me, and his fight at the end was the most accurate and realistic sword-combat that I have ever witnessed.” This is expert praise; for at the New York Tournament, in 1876, Mr. Wilson won the amateur championship of America with the foils. He had been educating himself in books as well as in fencing; Professor Mahoney, of the Trinity Chapel School, New York, was his tutor and his intimate friend, and now he ranks as one of the best read actors on the stage and as an accomplished writer and speaker.

In the meantime Mr. Wilson had also saved money, and he used his savings to emancipate himself from the variety profession and enable him to join a regular theatrical company. His dramatic *début* was as Cool in *London Assurance*; his second part was Lamp in *Wild Oats*. His salary was £3 a week,

and for this he had sacrificed £20 a week as a variety performer ; but he felt that the distinction of being a “ real ” actor more than compensated for the difference. Little by little the stage managers and his associates convinced him that his face, voice, and figure were better suited for comedy than for tragedy, and at last he relinquished his ambition to become another Garrick, Kean, or Kemble, and forgot the Shakspearean rôles that he had carefully committed to memory. The happy accident of a meeting with Manager McCaull, who was organizing a comic opera company, decided his future. “ How much salary do you



want ? ” inquired McCaull. “ One hundred dollars a week,” replied Mr. Wilson. “ I’ll give you fifty and chance it,” said McCaull. “ One hundred or no engagement,” answered Wilson. The wolf was at his door ; but he had Spartan courage. A week later they met again. “ How much is your salary now ? ” asked McCaull. “ The same as last week—one hundred ! ”—replied Wilson ; and McCaull said, “ Well, I’ll try you for luck.” The luck came. Under the McCaull management, Mr. Wilson appeared in *The Queen’s Lace Handkerchief*, *The Princess of Trebizonde*, *Prince Methusalem*, *The Merry War*, and *Falka*, and then went to Europe to study the best French and English methods. He returned to accept a long and successful engagement at the Casino, his popularity increasing with every new opera and his salary with every season.

At last, secure of the experience and the capital, Mr. Wilson determined to have a comic opera company of his own, and produced *The Oolah*, at the Broadway Theatre, New York. It was not a first-night success; but he made it a three-hundred-night success by his interpolations, his songs, and his fun. Since then he has produced a new opera once a year, and always with the most satisfactory artistic and pecuniary results. He is now starring through the States in *Half A King*, which he produced at the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, last October. His business manager is his boyhood friend, Mr. A. H. Canby, who believes that Mr. Wilson will develop into a dramatic comedian when he has accumulated a sufficient fortune to risk the experiment. With such pluck, perseverance, natural talent, wide experience, and constant study, nothing is impossible to the king of comic opera in America.

A FAMOUS OLD PANTOMIME.

BY W. J. LAWRENCE.

IN reviewing the course of theatrical affairs, it often occurs to the student of the past that Father Time is apt to dupe poor mortals by reversing his hour-glass. Old scenes are carefully reproduced, to be duly gaped at by the unthinking as novelties. Possibly the paragraphist who delights in dilating upon the enthusiasm of the besiegers of the pit on the morn of certain *premières* has little idea that a century and a half ago a like enthusiasm (only better sustained) was aroused over the production of a trivial pantomime, and that the doors of Covent Garden had frequently to be opened three or four hours before the performance to prevent damage from being done by the assembled multitude.

Long before Rich's production of the famous pantomime of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, on February 12, 1739-40, public curiosity had been aroused concerning it. This piece—which would be more fittingly described now as an opera in three acts with interspersed harlequinade scenes—had been fully twelve years in preparation. Something like £2000 had been spent on its mounting—a large sum in those days; and many minds had gone to the building up of this remarkable concoction. The eccentric John Rich, himself the first of British harlequins, had drafted the entire scenario and devised the comic scenes. Lewis Theobald, the Shakspearean commentator and first hero of the *Dunciad*, wrote the libretto; and Lampe (whose wife appeared as Rhodope in the lyrical scenes) supplied the music. Added to this, magni-

ficent scenery had been painted for the production years previously by the eminent artist George Lambert, Hogarth's crony.

It is difficult nowadays to realise what these early pantomimes were really like. Amalgams of ballet, opera, and farce, the entertainments of Rich's day generally treated two sharply contested, irreconcilable themes, not dealt with, as in the Grimaldi pantomime, the one after the other, but mixed up higgledy-piggledy, and then somewhat arbitrarily sliced into acts. Writing in *Tom Jones*, of the new theatrical dish, Fielding says it "consisted of two parts, which the inventor distinguished by the names of the serious and the comic. The serious exhibited a certain number of heathen gods and goddesses, who were certainly the worst and dullest company into which an audience was ever introduced; and (which was a secret known to few) were actually intended so to be in order to contrast the comic part of the entertainment, and to display the tricks of harlequin to the better advantage."

After this it will not be surprising to find that in *Orpheus and Eurydice* there were separate casts of lyrical and of pantomimic performers. Hippisley, the comedian, who appears to have been almost the first wearer of the motley, played Drudge, pantaloons's servant, otherwise the clown. Manager Rich, under the name of Mr. Lun, was the dashing, *unbespangled* harlequin, and Signor Grimaldi (Joey's father) figured as pantaloons. This is the first instance on record of the appearance of a member of the Grimaldi family in English pantomime, and it is all the more noteworthy, as the woefully inaccurate memoirs of Joe Grimaldi, as edited by Boz, fix the date of his father's arrival on our shores at 1760.

The following brief synopsis of the old Covent Garden pantomime has its value in showing the curious arrangement of the scenes:—" *Interlude I.*—Rhodope, Queen of Thrace, practising art magick, makes love to Orpheus. He rejects her love. She is enraged. 'A serpent appears who receives Rhodope's commands, and those ended, glides off the stage.' Here the comic part begins. When the opera is resumed a scene takes place between Orpheus and Eurydice. Eurydice's heel is pierced by the serpent, behind the scenes. She dies on the stage—after which the comic part is continued. *Interlude II.*—Scene: Hell. Pluto, &c., enters. Orpheus prevails on Pluto to restore Eurydice to him. Ascalax tells Orpheus that Eurydice shall follow him, but that if he should look back at her before they shall have passed the bounds of Hell, she will die again. Orpheus turns back to look for Eurydice. Fiends carry her away. After this the comic part is resumed. *Interlude III.*—Orpheus again

rejects Rhodope's solicitations. Departs. The scene draws, and discovers Orpheus slain. Several Baccants enter in a triumphant manner. They bring in the lyre and chaplet of Orpheus. Rhodope stabs herself. The piece concludes with the remainder of the comic part."

Some idea of the success of this strange jumble may be gleaned from an account in the *Scots Magazine* for March, 1740, wherein we are told that "*Orpheus and Eurydice* draws the whole town to Covent Garden; whether for the opera itself (the words of which are miserable stuff) or for the pantomimical interlude, with which it is intermixed, I cannot determine. The music is pretty good, and the tricks are not foolisher than usual, and some have said they have more meaning than most that have preceded them. The performance is grand as to the scenery. What pleases everybody is a regular growth of trees, represented more like nature than what has yet been seen upon the stage; and the representation of a serpent so lively as to frighten half the ladies who see it. It is, indeed, curious in its kind, being wholly a piece of machinery, that enters, performs its exercise of head, body, and tail in a most surprising manner, and rushes behind the curtain with a velocity scarce credible. It is about a foot and a half in circumference at the thickest part, and far exceeds the former custom of stuffing a boy into such likeness. It is believed to have cost more than £200; and when the multitude of wheels, springs, &c., whereof it consists, are considered, the charge will not appear extravagant. The whole Royal Family have seen this performance; and, from what can be judged, everybody else will see it before the end of the season, the house being every day full at 3 o'clock, though seldom empty till after eleven."

Samuel Hoole, father of the eminent translator of Tasso and Ariosto, was Rich's chief mechanist at this period, and the contriver of the serpent referred to. According to Cumberland, he kept a shop for the sale of mechanical toys, and after his great achievement at Covent Garden could turn his mind to nothing but the manufacture of serpents. The public, however, looked askance at these uncanny playthings, and the poor man, having a large stock on his hands, was ruined, bankrupt, and undone.

Orpheus and Eurydice was performed by Rich throughout the remainder of the season, and was successfully revived by him in 1747, and again in 1755, when it ran thirty-one nights. His successors at Covent Garden reproduced it with equal good fortune in 1768. In October, 1787, almost half a century after it had originally seen the light, the famous old pantomime was again put in the bill—by royal command, it was whispered. But taste had changed, and only two performances were then borne with.

Portraits.

MISS MARIE TEMPEST.

IN America, where she has gained some of her greatest successes and made herself one of the favourites of New York audiences, Miss Marie Tempest is widely known as "Dresden China." Whoever coined the name for her had evidently a talent for nicely hitting off characteristics in a phrase. It exactly suits her style of beauty, and the dainty charm of her acting. Add to this that she has a very pretty voice, which she uses to the best advantage, and no one will wonder that her career in light opera has been one of successive triumphs at every stage. Like Mr. Hayden Coffin, she first became widely known during the run of *Dorothy*. Both had, of course, sung, and sung with success, before the production of Alfred Cellier's engaging work, but its enormous popularity and very long run brought them prominently into public view, and gave them the positions on the stage which they have held ever since. Miss Tempest in the name-part certainly did a good deal to secure for the operetta its long lease of favour. *Doris* followed, and then *The Red Hussar*, with which Miss Tempest began in America when she crossed the Atlantic in 1891. She went for four months, but she actually stayed for four years, taking holidays, of course, in between, but not making her reappearance in London until 1895, when she joined Mr. George Edwardes's company at Daly's Theatre for the production of *The Artist's Model*. Once during her stay in the United States she made an *excursus* into grand opera—or rather the modified form of that *genre* which Bizet and Ambroise Thomas gave us in *Carmen* and *Mignon*, but for the greater part of the time it was light opera that claimed her. All who heard her singing of the Nightingale song in Zeller's *Vogelhandler* (which we shall hope to see in an English version over here when the present craze for "musical farce" has passed away) declare that nothing more delightful in its way could be listened to; it created almost a *furor* among her audiences. In *The Geisha* her refined and charming vocalisation, together with her always conscientious acting of a part that gives but little scope, make up an entirely artistic performance. One only longs to see an artist so gifted and so thorough in something more worthy of her talents.

"THE THEATRE," JANUARY, 1897.



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MISS MARIE TEMPEST.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

At the moment of writing, the chief thought in the minds of playgoers is connected with pantomime. Oddly enough, however, Christmas week has this year been chosen by half-a-dozen managers for the production of their novelties, although of the number, so far as west-end theatres are concerned, Mr. Oscar Barrett alone offers traditional Christmas fare in the shape of his first Drury Lane pantomime, *Aladdin*.

KING RICHARD III.

Revival of Shakspeare's Historical Play at the Lyceum Theatre, December 19.

Richard, Duke of Gloster (afterwards	Sir William Catesby ..	.. .. Mr. TYARS
King Richard III.) ..	.. HENRY IRVING	.. .. Mr. CLARENCE HAGUE
King Edward IV. ..	.. Mr. GORDON CRAIG	.. .. Mr. MARTIN HARVEY
George, Duke of Clarence	Mr. COOPER CLIFFE	.. .. Mr. TABB
Henry, Earl of Richmond (afterwards	.. ..	.. .. Mr. RIVINGTON
Henry VII.) ..	.. Mr. FRANK COOPER	.. .. Mr. NORMAN FORBES
Cardinal Bouchler ..	.. .. Mr. CUSHING	.. .. Mr. WILLIAM FARREN, jun.
Duke of Buckingham	Mr. F. H. MACKLIN	.. .. Miss EDITH CRAIG
Duke of Norfolk ..	.. .. Mr. LACY	.. .. Edward, Prince of Wales (afterwards
Lord Rivers ..	.. Mr. FULLER MELLISH	.. .. Edward V.) ..
Lord Hastings..	.. .. Mr. BEN WEBSTER	.. .. Miss LENA ASHWELL
Lord Stanley ..	.. Mr. FREDERIC ROBINSON	.. .. Miss NORMAN
Lord Lovel ..	.. .. Mr. ARCHER	.. .. Elizabeth ..
Marquis of Dorset ..	.. .. Mr. HOWARD	.. .. Miss MAUD MILTON
Bishop of Ely ..	.. .. Mr. REYNOLDS	.. .. Duchess of York ..
Sir Richard Ratcliff ..	.. .. Mr. BELMORE	.. .. Miss MARY RORKE
		.. .. Lady Anne ..
		.. .. Miss JULIA ARTHUR
		.. .. Margaret ..
		.. .. Miss GENEVIEVE WARD

Lords, Ladies, Aldermen, Soldiers, Messengers, &c.

The history of Henry Irving's rescue of Shakspeare's play, *King Richard III.*, from the degradation into which it had fallen has already been written. Twenty years ago he introduced at the Lyceum his new reading of the title-part; twenty years ago he gave the piece, certain necessary excisions alone excepted, in the form in which it was conceived by the author. By so doing he rendered almost impossible any revival in London of Colley Cibber's distorted and dishonouring adaptation. He proved, moreover, to the satisfaction of all thinking persons that Shakspeare's Richard was not a vulgar, noisy impostor, whose villainy was as obvious as his hump, and who went about the world foaming at the mouth and uttering such bombastic phrases as "Off with his head; so much for Buckingham!" In the place of this cheap, tawdry, twopenny-coloured figure, Henry Irving gave us a man of subtle brain and vast intellectuality, who recognised and enjoyed his superiority over those surrounding him, and who set out with the fixed principle that since he could not be a lover he was determined to be a villain. So plainly is all this revealed in the text that it is difficult to see how anyone could have gone astray on the point. To be rightly appreciated,

however, the piece had to be considered not as a vehicle for the exhibition of physical powers, but as a medium for the expression of the intellectual faculties. That no actor of our time has brought so much brain power as Henry Irving to bear alike upon his productions and the characters he has played is a fact which needs no proof; nor is it surprising, accordingly, that the purely intellectual aspect of Richard's nature should have attracted him. Hence a rendering marvellously subtle, suggestive, and convincing, which by all true Shakspearean students was straightway received as a faithful and accurate reflection of the poet's meaning.

Twenty years have elapsed since then, but the opinion still holds good. Certain slight changes the interval seems to have brought in Sir Henry's conception of the character, but none, if memory may be trusted, of vital importance. The portrait is, perhaps, a little more highly coloured; it contains here and there touches which almost verge upon the melodramatic. But what an extraordinarily clever picture it is of the scheming, plausible, unprincipled tyrant, who is prepared to wade through a river of blood, and even to sacrifice his own accomplices, in order that he may reach the throne! With what devilish ingenuity he contrives to dupe the credulous Anne, to outwit the Mayor of London, to mould the hardest material to his own uses! At the very outset Sir Henry strikes the note of mocking villainy which is to be the prevailing one throughout the piece, and which only merges into a more forcible and strenuous strain when death and disaster press heavily upon the guilty usurper. It is impossible, unfortunately, within the limited space at our disposal to give anything like an adequate idea of the scope, the subtlety, and the diabolical malice of the character as interpreted by Sir Henry, who makes of it one of the most effective in his large and varied repertory. Upon the efforts of his supporters in the revival there is no need to dilate. The piece is adequately performed, if not always brilliantly. Much had been expected from Miss Julia Arthur, an American actress, who has done good service in other directions. Unhappily the part of Lady Anne proved too much for her strength, although in the less exacting passages she showed decided ability. Miss Genevieve Ward's fine declamatory method suited her admirably for the character of Margaret of Anjou, while Miss Maud Milton and Miss Mary Rorke appeared with success as Elizabeth and the Duchess of York. Mr. Cooper Cliffe and Mr. Frank Cooper acted earnestly and carefully as respectively Clarence and Richmond. As regards accessories, nothing could be more sumptuous or more effective than the manner in which the revival has been mounted. Of the most striking scenes we can

only indicate, as notable examples of beauty and taste, the opening street scene, the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, the Tower ramparts, Tower-hill, and Bosworth-field.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Revival of Shakspeare's Pastoral Comedy at the St. James's Theatre, December 2.

Duke	Mr. JAMES FERNANDEZ	Adam	Mr. HENRY LORAINÉ
Frederick	Mr. C. AUBREY SMITH	Dennis .. ..	.. Mr. A. W. MUNRO
Amiens	Mr. BERTRAM WALLIS	Touchstone .. ..	.. Mr. H. V. ESMOND
Jaques .. ..	.. Mr. W. H. VERNON	Corin	Mr. WILLIAM H. DAY
First Lord .. ..	.. Mr. H. H. VINCENT	Silvius	Mr. ARTHUR ROYSTON
Second Lord	Mr. GEORGE BANCROFT	William	Mr. GEORGE P. HAWTREY
Le Beau	Mr. VINCENT STERNROD	Hymen .. ..	.. Miss JULIE F. OPP
Charles .. ..	.. Mr. J. WHEELER	Rosalind	Miss JULIA NEILSON
Oliver .. ..	.. Mr. H. B. IRVING	Celia .. ..	.. Miss FAY DAVIS
Jaques de Bois	Mr. R. LORAINÉ	Phoebe	Miss DOROTHEA BAIRD
Orlando	Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER	Audrey	Miss KATE PHILLIPS

Mr. George Alexander's revival of *As You Like It* will be remembered as a striking example of the harmonious and agreeable result produced by the careful supervision and intelligent direction of one controlling mind. The piece has been mounted handsomely, but by no means lavishly. Shakspeare's exquisite comedy has been given an adequate but not an extravagantly rich setting. This is exactly as it should be, for, while sufficient has been done to satisfy the popular taste for display, there is nowhere any irritating violation of the poet's purpose. Mr. Alexander has restored the concluding Masque of Hymen, which, when curtailed of its somewhat excessive length, will form a delightful and eminently pleasing termination to the comedy. He has also retained the song "It was a lover and his lass," sung by the pages in Act 5, although the execution of the ditty, as it happens, leaves something to be desired. Certain necessary excisions he has, of course, been compelled to make, but these have been accomplished in every instance discreetly and with fitting respect for the author's meaning. The principal scene, representing a glade in the Forest of Arden, is one of rare beauty, and leaves the spectator impressed with a pleasing sense of reposeful calm. And if the general performance hardly at any point reaches the level of absolute perfection, it possesses at least the merit of earnestness and sincere endeavour. Miss Julia Neilson's Rosalind is a being of infinite loveliness and womanly feeling. Pardonable nervousness served in a measure to mar the effect of the opening passages, in which the actress seemed self-conscious and ill at ease. But as the play progressed Miss Neilson steadily improved, revealing in the swooning-scene a measure of realistic expression calculated to surprise her warmest admirers. Exceedingly bright and effective also was her playful banter of Orlando, particularly when she called upon him to woo her in the character of Rosalind. Apart from an occasional tendency towards sedateness, Mr. Alexander's Orlando

is the best the London stage has witnessed for many years. He speaks the lines with a fine regard for their rhythmical significance, and is at all times a gallant, manly, and romantic figure. No less admirable is the Jaques of Mr. W. H. Vernon, who, while never straining after effect, extracts every ounce of meaning from the author's words. Mr. H. V. Esmond gives a clever and unconventional reading of the character of Touchstone, which, however it may traverse traditional ideas, is evidently based upon, and even justified by, a close study of the text. By her bright and sympathetic performance as Celia, Miss Fay Davis consolidates her right to be classed as a comedian of the first rank. Special music has been composed for the Masque by Mr. Edward German, whose brilliant work serves still further to enhance the reputation he gained at the Lyceum. Altogether, the revival fully deserves success by reason of its picturesque beauty, effective mounting, and admirable acting.

THE CIRCUS GIRL.

A Musical Play, in Two Acts. Book by JAMES T. TANNER and W. PALINGS. Music by IVAN CARYLL and LIONEL MONCKTON. Lyrics by HARRY GREENBANK and ADRIAN ROSS. Produced at the Gaiety Theatre, December 5.

Dick Capel.. ..	Mr. SEYMOUR HICKS	Valliant	Mr. W. H. POWELL
Sir Titus Wemyss ..	Mr. HARRY MONKHOUSE	Biggs	Mr. EDMUND PAYNE
Drivelli	Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS	Lucille	Miss KATIE SEYMOUR
Hon. Reginald Gower ..	Mr. LIONEL MACKINDER	"La Favorita" ..	Miss ETHEL HAYDON
Auguste	Mr. WILLIE WARDE	Mrs. Drivelli ..	Miss CONNIE EDISS
Adolphe	Mr. BERTIE WRIGHT	Lady Diana Wemyss ..	Miss MARIA DAVIS
Albertoni	Mr. COLIN COOP	Marie	Miss GRACE PALOTTA
Commissaire of Police ..	Mr. ROBERT NAINBY	Louise	Miss LILY JOHNSTON
Vicomte Gaston	Mr. MAURICE FARKOA	Liane	Miss LOUIE COOTE
Toothick Pasha	Mr. ARTHUR HOPE	Emilie	Miss ALICE BETELLE
Rudolph	Mr. E. D. WARDES	Juliette	Miss MAIDIE HOPE
Proprietor of the Café de la Régence ..	Mr. LESLIE HOLLAND	Comtesse d'Épérnay ..	Miss ADA MAITLAND
Flobert	Mr. ROBERT SELBY	Marquise de Millefleurs ..	
Cocher	Mr. W. F. BROOKE		
Sergeant de Ville	Mr. FRED RING	Mdlle. Gompson	Miss KATHLEEN FRANCIS
		Dora Wemyss	Miss ALICE NEILSON
			Miss ELLALINE TERRISS

The Circus Girl, if in point of writing and of construction below rather than above the average of Gaiety pieces, is among the most amusing and beautiful of its class. For this the credit lies entirely with the artists and the producer. In the final scene Mr. George Edwardes has, in truth, surpassed himself—a spectacle more dazzling and attractive it would be hard to conceive. Upon the plot, or want of it, it would be useless to insist. The prosperity of such pieces lies outside any question of story or intrigue. Suffice it that Dora Wemyss, a young girl just fresh from school, comes to Paris to meet her parents, and there falls in with Dick Capel, whom she believes to belong to a circus troupe, among whom he is known as the Cannon King. Dick, although a gentleman of independent means, is induced to assume the character thus forced upon him. Seeking refuge from the fury of his jealous wife, Dora's father hides in the

cannon, and is subsequently shot out of it, to his profound indignation. Explanations ensue, and all ends in the usual conventional manner. A much more amusing thread of the story follows the adventures of a delightfully pugnacious little waiter who, in order to win his sweetheart, determines to measure his strength with Toothick Pasha, the great Turkish wrestler. This character, named Biggs, was played with unfailing humour and inexhaustible drollery by Mr. Edmund Payne, who had in Miss Katie Seymour a companion worthy of himself. Together the two made the great success of the evening in a couple of duets entitled "Professions" and "Clowns." But throughout the performance they kept the audience constantly amused and delighted by their clever antics. Mr. Seymour Hicks and Miss Ellaline Terriss, although neither so expert nor so original as the other two, danced and acted with great spirit, the latter singing the ditty "A Little Bit of String" in a manner to charm and fascinate all present. Mr. Arthur Williams was genuinely funny as Drivelli, the circus proprietor, and Miss Ethel Haydon exceedingly graceful as "La Favorita." Of the musical numbers by Mr. Ivan Caryll and Mr. Lionel Monckton, those by the latter composer, although substantially less quantitatively, achieved the greater popularity. The authors' dialogue calls for no criticism, for reasons which need hardly be expressed, and for once Mr. Greenbank and Mr. Ross are unable to claim praise for the wit or ingenuity of their lyrics.

THE KISS OF DELILAH.

A Play, in Three Acts, by GEORGE GRANT and JAMES LISLE. Produced at Drury Lane Theatre, November 27.

Maximilian Robespierre	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN	Jacques.. ..	.. Mr. MORGAN
Collet d'Herbois ..	Mr. BROOKE WARREN	Pierre	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN
Hannibal Legendre ..	.. Mr. SAM JOHNSON	Sergeant of the National Guard	Mr. WOBURN
Coupe Tête	Mr. EDWARD O'NEILL	Hermine Vanhove ..	.. Miss HILDA SPONG
Guyot .. ..	.. Mr. PALMER	Estelle Beaupas ..	.. Miss EDITH JORDAN
Chapuy .. ..	.. Mr. PHILIP DARWIN	François Joseph Talma	Mr. T. B. THALBERG

Since the production of *The Kiss of Delilah* the authors have published a statement intimating that, owing to the illness of one of the principal actors, and the impossibility of replacing him, the piece was seen in an incomplete and mutilated form. Even at its best, however, it is tolerably certain that so crude and old-fashioned a play could never have secured the favour of a London audience. So little respect have Messrs. Grant and Lisle shown for historical accuracy that, not content with falsifying established facts, they venture also to offer a wholly distorted and utterly unrecognisable portrait of Robespierre, who in their piece is represented as an elderly and love-sick swain, irresolute of purpose, and dominated by his love for a pretty actress

belonging to the Théâtre Français. The intrigue, which eventually resolves itself into a game at hide-and-seek between Robespierre, Mlle. Vanhove and her lover, Talma, is clumsily conceived, while overheard "asides" and soliloquies proclaim the desperate straits to which the authors are driven in order to carry on their plot. Nor was the acting much better than the piece, although perhaps it is hardly fair to blame the performers if they failed to endow such stereotyped characters with vitality, or to render acceptable dialogue so stilted and so pretentious. It is significant of the amount of faith placed in their own work by Messrs. Grant and Lisle that, by reason of arrangements previously completed, the run of the piece was inflexibly limited to two nights.

LITTLE EYOLF.

A Play, in Three Acts, by HENRIK IBSEN, translated by WILLIAM ARCHER. Produced at the Avenue Theatre, November 23.

Alfred Allmers ..	Mr. COURTENAY THORPE	Miss Asta Allmers	Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS
Mrs. Rita Allmers..	.. Miss JANET ACHURCH	Engineer Borgheim	.. Mr. C. M. LOWNE
Eyolf	Master STEWART DAWSON	The Rat-Wife ..	Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL

It may be that within the folds of *Little Eyolf* there lurks an infinity of undiscovered and undiscoverable meanings. It may be that those who approach Dr. Ibsen's latest work in a spirit of mysterious reverence are well advised. It may be that the play is a masterpiece of symbolism, the husk, so to speak, which encloses a great moral and emblematic truth. All these things are possible. But for ourselves we are content to regard the piece from the obvious and commonsense standpoint. The playwright who fails to indicate clearly and intelligently the purpose he has in view lacks one of the chief attributes of his craft. So if we find in *Little Eyolf* a work mainly distinguished, despite certain traces of power, by the cheap and tawdry nature of its melodramatic effects, the grossness of its allusions, and the intolerable dulness of its dialogue, the author has only himself to blame. The play practically resolves itself into a study of passion; passion none the less brutalising and repulsive because marriage has placed upon it the seal of legitimacy. It is in such wise Rita Allmers regards her husband, jealous of everything that comes between them down to their only little son. "There stood the champagne, but you tasted it not"—this is Rita's figurative but degradingly plain method of suggesting that her husband has grown tired of her cloying attractions. But Mrs. Allmers is not the only person in the piece possessed of similar views; for no sooner does Asta, Allmers' supposed sister, discover that, owing to an indiscretion on the part of her mother, she no longer has any right to the relationship which has hitherto served to subdue her passion than

she recognises the imperative necessity of escaping from the dangerous propinquity of the man she now realises she loved with an ardour far exceeding that of a sister. For those who care to dabble in such muddy waters *Little Eyolf* may perhaps have charms. Personally we can only stigmatise it as a dull, wordy, unpleasant, and prodigiously tiresome play which no healthily-minded person would care to see a second, if indeed a first, time. Whatever interest its performance created was due chiefly to the appearance together on one stage of three consummate artists like Miss Janet Achurch, Miss Elizabeth Robins, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Of the brilliant interpretation given in each instance lack of space alone prevents us from speaking in detail. Mr Courtenay Thorpe furnished a curiously faithful study of the insufferable prig, Allmers, Mr. C. M. Lowne was the cheeriest of road-makers, while Master Stewart Dawson in the title-part again proved himself to be one of the cleverest boy actors on the stage. During the last fortnight of the run Mrs. Patrick Campbell replaced Miss Achurch in the part of Rita, but by no means to the advantage of the piece.

AN IDYLL OF THE CLOSING CENTURY.

A Duologue, by ESTELLE BURNEY. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, December 3.

The Hon. Millicent Warreyne

Miss WINIFRED EMERY

Hayes Dormer, M.P. .. Mr. CYRIL MAUDE

Miss Burney's duologue, despite its clumsy title, is a remarkably clever bit of work. The writing is always good and at moments positively brilliant, while the cynical tone adopted by the talented authoress at the outset speedily yields to a kindlier feeling, the moral of the piece being in truth excellent. The plot deals with the determination made by two young people of advanced views to enter upon matrimony merely as a matter of expediency. As, however, they come to discuss the question, they discover to their dismay that after all the one thing which offers a solid basis for happiness in married life is love. The trifle was exquisitely acted by Miss Winifred Emery and Mr. Cyril Maude.

A PRINCESS OF ORANGE.

An Original Drama, in One Act, by FRED JAMES. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, December 3.

Captain Wilford Blount

Mr. ERNEST LEICESTER

Don Fernand de Medillo Mr. LUIGI LABLACHE
Louise, Princess of Orange Miss MAY WHITTY

This is a little play of the *capa y espada* order, founded upon an incident in Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*. A couple of conspirators, one English, the other Spanish, and both intent upon accomplishing the death of the Prince of Orange, meet by

chance in the common room of a tavern. The Princess, who has heard of their intention to assassinate her husband, disguises herself as a waiting-maid, and speedily contrives to set the two men by the ears, with the result that the Englishman runs his companion through the body. Thereafter, yielding to his better instincts, he consents, at the instance of the Princess, to forego his bloody purpose. The piece, although not without certain stirring qualities, is of too old-fashioned a character to be of any practical use. It received a spirited interpretation at the hands of Messrs. Leicester and Lablache and Miss May Whitty.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by J. P. HURST. Produced at the Court Theatre, December 8.

Keith Dunlop	Mr. JOSEPH CARNE	Lucy Maitland	Miss JESSIE BATEMAN
Ulric Falshaw	Mr. GEORGE HIPPLEY	Anna Gurbs, M.D. ..	Miss M. TALBOT
Sebastian Meggeson ..	Mr. COMPTON COUTTS	Jane McKillop	Miss ALICE BEET
Kelland Smith	Mr. FREDERICK VOLPE	Charlotte Bap	Miss MARIE LYONS
Hilary Glyn	Mr. IVAN WATSON	Mrs. Lascelles	Miss SPENCER-BRUNTON
Constance Glyn	Miss ESME BERINGER	Barbara Earp	Miss ADELA WEEKES

A brief account of the story related in *Woman's World* will suffice to indicate both the character and the principal weakness of Mr. J. P. Hurst's new comedy. From the early age of sixteen Constance Glyn, neglected by a frivolous father, has had to fight the battle of life unaided. When the play opens, twelve years later, Constance has won her way into the front rank of women journalists, and is able to command a ready market for her articles. Her knowledge is comprehensive; she has apparently studied every possible subject, with the exception of the all-powerful one of love. Of this, its symptoms and its tendencies, she is supposed to be as ignorant as a newly-born babe. When, therefore, a fascinating but wholly unscrupulous actor floats into her orbit she falls an easy victim to his charms. But Ulric Falshaw is an undisguised egoist, who has little affection to bestow upon anyone but himself. He has, however, drifted into something in the nature of an engagement with his cousin, Lucy Maitland, Constance Glyn's secretary, an unprincipled little minx, who prompts Ulric to make love to Constance with the view of inducing her to obtain from a certain Mr. Kelland Smith a sum sufficient to enable him (Falshaw) to start management on his own account. This contemptible scheme succeeds for a time. Love transforms Constance into a new being, full of happy aspirations and womanly affection. Despite warnings from cool-headed friends, she insists upon yielding implicit trust to Falshaw's protestations. Presently her eyes are opened to the truth, and her belief in all that is good and honest is at once shattered. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the play—very

beautifully conceived, be it said, by the author—holds out distinct promise that, having recovered from the measles stage of love, Constance will yet enjoy happiness with her old admirer and staunch comrade, Keith Dunlop.

The piece suffers from the feeling of incredulity its performance awakens in the minds of the audience as to the possibility of a clever and shrewd woman like Constance Glyn ever being deceived by so shallow and specious an adventurer as Ulric Falshaw. The author, moreover, has committed the error of depicting this latter character as an unmitigated cad, who would hardly be tolerated for a moment by any self-respecting person. Possibly this impression may be as much due to stage treatment as to Mr. Hurst's delineation of the part. Wherever the fault lies, the result can only be described as extremely unfortunate. On the other hand, the comedy is wittily, although somewhat too caustically, written, and contains many telling hits at the ridiculous ideas of advanced women, sham art critics, lady politicians, and others of a like description. The prevailing tone of the piece is, however, too mordant and pessimistic to attract the ordinary public. Yet it is conceivable that its representation might have aroused greater enthusiasm had the character of Ulric Falshaw been played with more regard for its fascinating qualities. As Constance Glyn, Miss Esmé Beringer made another emphatic success by her clever rendering of a difficult and many-sided part. Miss Jessie Bateman showed decided promise in the unpleasant character of Lucy, while Miss Alice Beet, if somewhat lacking in force, made an acceptable Jane McKillop. A more finished performance than Miss M. Talbot's of the big-hearted, sensible lady doctor, Anna Gurbs, could not be desired, while an admirable sketch of a precocious little lift-attendant was supplied by Miss Adela Weekes, a young actress with a nice sense of humour. The remaining members of the cast can scarcely claim attention on the score of brilliancy.

THE EXTRAORDINARY BEHAVIOUR OF MRS. JALLOWBY.

A Farcical Comedy, in Three Acts, by CLIVE BROOKE. Produced at the Novelty Theatre, December 19.

Major-General Orcas Jallowby	Mr. J. NORTON-WILSON	Charlotte	Miss MAY ROSINE
Mrs. Orcas Jallowby..	.. Miss ISABEL GREY	Annabel Chevenix ..	.. Miss BELVORE
Harry .. ..	.. Mr. A. YOCKNEY	Lincoln Beale ..	Mr. GRAHAM WENTWORTH
Whibbler	Mr. CECIL COMPTON	Arthur Jallowby ..	.. Mr. CLIVE BROOKE
		Estelle Jallowby ..	.. Miss ELEANOR LANE

The shouts of laughter which greeted the performance of Mr. Clive Brooke's farce must not be interpreted by that gentleman as a token of approval. As a matter of fact it was the utter crudity and feebleness of the whole affair that stirred his scanty audience to ungovernable mirth. For frankly, nothing more inco-

herent or inept than *The Extraordinary Behaviour of Mrs. Jallowby* has been seen on the stage for many a day. The heroine is a female villain of the deepest dye, who accomplishes the most horrible deeds without a tremor. Guilty of murder, she marries the barrister who has succeeded in gaining a verdict for her; proceeds, after a week's honeymoon to threaten him with a revolver, and subsequently compasses the death of his father and mother, sister and brother, by administering to them poisoned cake at an afternoon tea. In so ambiguous a shape are these incidents presented, it is well-nigh impossible to say whether the author intends they shall be regarded as tragedy or farce. But as *The Extraordinary Behaviour of Mrs. Jallowby* is hardly likely to be seen again, the point is really of little or no importance.

IN PARIS.

The appearance of Madame Bernhardt in a new part is, though the play be old, as important an event in the Paris theatrical world as the production at her theatre of a new piece. *Lorenzaccio* is well known as one of Alfred de Musset's masterpieces, though one of his earliest works. He was only twenty-five when he wrote it. All we need say of the play itself is that *Lorenzaccio*, whom Sarah Bernhardt personates, is a sort of Italian Hamlet, who spends his youth in meditating delivery from a tyrant, and who, after the accomplishment of his design, is aghast at the inanity and hopelessness of work for human advancement. The rendering of the solitary young pessimist is among the finest creations of the great actress, and the enthusiasm of her admirers has exceeded its normal limits. The piece has been curtailed for the stage by M. Armand d'Artois.

L'Evasion, at the Théâtre Français, is another social drama from the pen of M. Brieux, the young and talented author of a number of pieces. We spoke last month of his *Bienfaiteurs*, the success of which is now exceeded by that of the present piece. The theme of *L'Evasion* is the heredity theory. Is the doctor right in forbidding the son of a man who has committed suicide to marry—or the daughter of a notorious woman of the *demi-monde* to become his wife? M. Brieux does not attempt to solve the problem, but his idea seems to be that force of character can counteract the influence of heredity and that the children of social outcasts need not necessarily be condemned to carry their parents' sin with them through life, but have every right to fight for their individual shares of happiness and love. The story is half told in the statement of its apparent object. The two young people do marry, in spite of the doctor (Pradhon), who is not

only a distinguished specialist but a vain and ambitious man surrounded by a tribe of other young and ambitious members of his profession. The author does not stint himself in his flings at these champions of modern social responsibility, and he places in juxtaposition to their sordid and inhuman tendencies the nobler strivings of the two self-examining victims of the parental stain. The young wife (Mlle. Lara), hypnotised by her uncle's (the doctor's) teaching, has her moment of weakness, but she "evades" her alleged destiny, discovering in herself, when the trial comes, powers of resistance and qualities of self-appreciation by which the author reaches the hopeful *denouement* necessary to suit the taste of an optimist theatre-going public. The cast was distributed chiefly among lesser-known lights of the Comédie Française. Coquelin-cadet, as a shepherd practising the healing art without a licence, was irresistible, and his interview with the great specialist is a masterly piece of dramatic dialogue.

Villiers de l'Isle Adam is a name hardly known outside the limited few for whom pure literature is not merely a passing distraction. His *Révolte* was brought out at the Vaudeville a quarter of a century ago, and, strange to say, withdrawn by order of the censor—why it is difficult to say, for there is nothing in it either of a political or of an immoral character, unless, indeed, it was just because such a piece was twenty-six years ahead of its time. It is the subject of Ibsen's *Doll's House*, written years before the latter, with a different ending. The wife in Villiers returns, and stifling her heart's yearning, buries her soul in the common life and routine of a money-grabbing husband. The piece has just been unearthed again, and given at the Odéon with great success. Mme. Legond-Weber as Elizabeth is as remarkable as Réjane in *Nora*. An English translation of this profound study of a clever, thoughtful woman, is about to appear. The original has long been out of print.

IN BERLIN.

At the Lessing Theater *Der Abend* (*The Evening*), a drama, in four acts, by Paul Lindau, has been brought out. It tells the story of a painter and his daughter, their struggles, joys, and hopes, and the ruin of their happiness. The painter, Herr Deuben, a man already approaching the evening of his days, is one of those whom a love of the beautiful and a certain skill in execution induce to devote themselves to art as the business of their lives. In course of time, it dawns upon them

that originality is granted to but a few minds in the course of a century. When they have thoroughly realised this fact, and have accepted it with a kind of good-tempered resignation, they devote themselves in their spare time to a less ambitious subsidiary pursuit, live for the rest from hand to mouth, and, if the pictures will not sell, set themselves to work, as Lindau expresses it, to make art fraternise with industry—they turn out posters, and in this way earn a little money. Erwin Deuben's wife, who has shared this Bohemian existence with him for a number of years, is dead, and has left behind her a sweet and loveable daughter. The action of the piece is supposed to pass about the time when this daughter arrives at a marriageable age. Opposite to where the two live is a manufactory, and the son of the manufacturer falls in love with the artist's child. Although in no hurry to marry her, he declares his love and makes known the honourable character of his intentions. More than this, he buys the latest picture painted by the father of his beloved, confides to him the task of decorating his villa in Wannsee, and, in the meantime, allows father and daughter to use the villa as a place of residence. The reader will, perhaps, not be surprised to learn that the seduction of the daughter is the outcome of this arrangement. It is discovered; the old man raves, and curses the seducer, who, however, expresses his intention of marrying the daughter.

The drama ought to have come to an end here; but either, as indeed seems probable, Lindau found this ending too pointless, or it was quite too satisfactory for a problem play in these modern days, or the three acts were not sufficient for him; in short, for whatever reason, the fact remains that the manufacturer's son has been betrothed from his youth up to the daughter of his father's partner. This young lady, it seems, is the friend of the unhappy girl whose innocence has been so cruelly imposed upon. When, in the course of conversation between the two *fiancées* of the manufacturer's son, the fact of this prior attachment becomes known, the painter's daughter announces her intention of going to America to earn her livelihood. The fourth act completely paralyses the effect of the play, which had been amusing and serious in many of the preceding scenes.

"How could you conceal from me that he was betrothed to you?" exclaims the painter's daughter. Yes, that is just the point. How could she conceal it from her? Moreover, how could it remain unknown to the first betrothed that her future husband was paying his addresses so earnestly to the painter's daughter? Nor is this all, for we are at a loss to understand how the artist—who, in spite of all his easy-going ways, holds

nothing so dear and so sacred as his daughter, and who has driven out the betrayer with curses even after he has expressed his willingness to marry his victim—can allow the poor girl to go over the sea, while he himself continues the even tenour of his way and is daily and hourly brought in contact with his insulter. The audience seemed to feel that there was something illogical in the play; but the acting saved the piece, and the performers, especially Herr Engels, were very warmly applauded.

The Thalia Theatre has produced two pieces of some interest—*Das Wetterhäuschen* (*The Little Weatherhouse*), by Adrian Ross, the German by Hermann Hirschel, and *Zwei Schwiegersöhne* (*Two Sons in Law*), by Maxime Boucheron, the German by Max Schönau. In *Das Wetterhäuschen* the stage presents one of those little houses which, hanging in the window, betoken fine or wet weather, according as the little man or the little woman comes out. The quaint little couple live and speak and sing, and both lament that they cannot know each other. Of course they cannot, for she sees the rain and he the sun, so they are invisible neighbours. While hopping in and out and gesticulating with the comical stiffness of puppets, they soon observe that their wooden hearts are beginning to burn. After many a pro and con, and many a sly thrust at mankind, which, it must be admitted, is often very wooden also, the little man and woman are united. The music of this very pretty little fairy-tale is by Bertram Luard Selby.

Zwei Schwiegersöhne is a farce. It tells how M. Brézillac, a wine merchant in Bordeaux, has a speciality—not in wines, but in customers. Young, handsome, smart, unmarried as he is, all the widows and maidens of the town flock to buy wine of him. Now, he loves the widow Marguerite, and has to face one of two alternatives—either to marry her and ruin his business, or not to marry her and shipwreck his happiness. There is only one way out of the difficulty, and that is to marry her secretly. Another man, the good-natured shop assistant, Narcisse, must pass as the husband in the eyes of the world. So the three start off on the wedding tour. When they return the real husband has to endure the torture of seeing his wife courted by others, while the man of straw has to expiate the sins which he is supposed, as the husband, to have committed. He has to atone for them to one of those mothers-in-law whose little peculiarities have afforded so much capital to the dramatic humorist and cynic. Of course all comes right in the end, and everyone is made as happy and contented as could be desired.

Wohlthäter (*Benefactor*) is the title of a play by Max Halpern, brought out at the Central Theater. In this play Herr Nieburg,

a very rich man, takes the little Erna, and supports her in lodgings at the house of one Frau Kuhnert. He humours her girlish fancy to study for the operatic stage, he surrounds her with every conceivable luxury, gives her night-dresses, stockings, and other compromising trifles. Erna, who accepts all these things from the strange gentleman, is shocked when she wakes up one morning and finds herself, not famous, but her benefactor's mistress. Her love for her music-master rouses her to a consciousness of her position. In an act which is both powerful and very true to life she shows the door to the rich man who has pretended to befriend her; and she now stands, as Frau Kuhnert explains to her with great directness, face to face for the first time with the direst need. Erna does not wish to embrace the lot of poverty. She has read too many novels in which fallen virtue has been raised up again by an unprejudiced man. She pictures herself as a Dame aux Camélias with a happy ending to her misfortunes. The singing-master shall be her saviour. Everything seems to be favourable, as he loves her in return, and theoretically holds the restoration of a ruptured innocence to be possible. He does not go so far as to put the theory into practice, however; and scarcely has he learnt that the rich Herr Nieburg is not Erna's cousin than he departs for ever. Erna throws herself out of the window. The piece is of unequal merit, but contains some strong situations, and was, in parts, admirably well acted.

IN VIENNA.

The dramatic event of the month has been the production at the Burgtheater of Ludwig Fulda's *Der Sohn des Khalifen* (*The Caliph's Son*), a dramatic fairy-tale in four acts. It is the story of a prince who is taught by suffering to abandon all his selfishness, all his arrogance and tyrannical oppression, until he comes at last to be willing to offer up even his life for others. The old familiar tale of Haroun al Raschid, the just, the friend of the people, the hero of the *Arabian Nights*, relates how he wandered through the lanes and alleys of his capital disguised, in order to become acquainted with the joys and sorrows of his subjects. In this play Assad, "Son of the Caliph," and hero of the piece, is compelled to experience in his own person and in the solitude of the throne all the sorrow which his predecessors and especially himself, have brought upon the people. In the beginning Assad knows not what good and evil mean; he learns to know both by being forced to tread the path of both in the stern school of suffering.

The *deus ex machina* of the fairy-tale makes his appearance in the disguise of an old beggar. The audience easily guess that there is some terrible mystery about this man by the horror which the arrival of the "dreadful Dervish" occasions in Bagdad. It seems that he only appears upon the scene when a general catastrophe threatens the city. When Assad, victorious and laden with spoils, has returned from the battlefield and is slumbering on his divan in the arms of the Princess Morgiana, whom he has captured and who is now his favourite slave, the Dervish enters. He makes the haughty Prince start up in terror. "Famine is knocking at thy golden doors," he cries; "wake up, and in me behold thy starving people!" Assad threatens him with death, and the old man departs, but only to return and renew his demands after the Prince has sent away his Morgiana, now in disfavour. Suddenly the old man, who had fallen helpless to the ground, arises, and standing erect before the Prince, pronounces, with commanding gesture, the curse that Assad shall suffer in his own body, and in all its sharpness, the wrong which he inflicts on others. It is a most effective and fruitful incident, and the audience sees the curse fulfilled in jest and in earnest. The blows, the insults, the caresses which the Prince has visited upon others, all are visited in turn upon himself, and the spectator follows the mysterious punishment with the keenest interest and surprise. It appears that the Dervish was condemned, though innocent, under the rule of Assad's grandfather, many years before. His suffering, he says, has made him immortal. Assad's father, the Caliph, who retired from the throne in favour of his son, went mad and is dead; the thought that the son he had idolised intended to renounce the throne and go forth into the desert as a penitent, killed him. Morgiana, also, whose touching love Assad learns too late to value, after he had disinherited her and caused her the bitterest griefs, is placed again by him upon the throne. The shock caused by these changes of fortune is too much for her, and Assad kneels by the bier of his beloved. But a miracle takes place; she is not dead. The Dervish has saved for Assad her whom he had broken like a reed. She will live if Assad dies, and dies willingly, for her; so says this mysterious physician of body and soul. The Prince consents, only asking for one sweet hour with his adored one ere he closes his eyes upon the light of heaven for ever. But when he has taken this supreme resolution, and has gone all lengths of self-renunciation, the Dervish intervenes: "Him whom thou wast is dead," he cries. "Live and give life!"

The Caliph's Son was very cordially received, and the author was called before the curtain four or five times after each act.

At the Deutsches Volkstheater, the *Schwieger-mutter* (mother-in-law) again makes her appearance on the stage. She has been allowed a little respite for some time past, as she had appeared too often of late. She is now again received with welcome. The mother-in-law of the piece in question—a German version of Meilhac and St. Albin's comedy under the title of *Der Herr Abbé*—is not at all a pleasant lady. Her dead husband was somewhat easy-going, and in order to protect her daughter from the wedded misery which she has endured herself, she will give the hand of her daughter only to a man who will keep her (the mother-in-law) in the home. Count Yvon, who loves Mme. Von Closrobin's daughter, accepts this condition, and he finds that his life is made simply intolerable by his mother-in-law's suspiciousness; not only does she hardly ever let him out of her sight, but she organises a system of espionage, in order to keep him constantly under supervision. It may be imagined what feelings she experiences when she learns that the Count has a mistress with whom he keeps appointments in a neighbouring villa. She has already decided on a separation when the Count's former tutor, the Abbé Micat, entreats to be allowed to bring the Count to a proper state of mind again. He goes to the accursed villa, and when the mother-in-law follows later on she sees to her horror the Abbé, with the Count, his mistress, and several friends seated at table. Only then does she realise that this so-called mistress of the Count is his wife. The young couple have become weary of the burden of their mother's watchfulness and escape from her. The idea is a good one, but it is too long spun out. The second act is very amusing, but the first and third are rather wearisome. *Der Herr Abbé* was followed by a one-act comedy by Otto Erich Hartleben, *Die Sittliche Forderung* (*The Moral Claim*), which is a very amusing little piece—apparently a skit on Sadermann's *Heimat*. A young lady leaves her provincial home and becomes a singer; a worthy provincial brings her back after the lapse of some years; the couple had once been in love but the man drew back because his own father wanted to marry the girl. The father is now dead, so that the two can at length become united.

Friedrich Hebbel's tragedy, *Judith*, which has been allowed a long rest, has been brought out again at the Burgtheater. *Der Schmetterling* (*The Butterfly*), at the Theater an der Wein, contains a very pretty idea: who first conceived it is a difficult thing to decide. It was utilised in a French piece a good many years ago; but, in spite of its venerable age, it is still capable of being utilised on the stage, and so Messrs. A. M. Willner, the

librettist of Goldmarck's *Cricket on the Hearth*, and B. Buchbinder, the author of the *Heirathsschwindler* produced at the Raimund Theatre, have made a three-act operetta out of it, to which the young composer, Karl Weinherger, has written the music. The Butterfly is the perfumer, Pierre Rosefleur, of Rouabruna. He has earned for himself the name of the Butterfly on account of his fickle propensities; but he is finally captured by the little daughter of his competitor, Millefleur, and held fast in the chains of love. He marries Jeannette, and the Mayor, with an hotel keeper, performs the ceremony in his official capacity. The guests are still celebrating the occasion when intelligence arrives through the post that the Mayor has been superseded by order of the Government two days before. The decree had most unfortunately been delayed. The marriage is therefore void, and Pierre Rosefleur and Jeannette Millefleur are not lawfully united. Mme. Millefleur seeks her child in vain. This lady had shown herself a typical specimen of the tyrannical mother-in-law, before the marriage had even taken place—one of those mother's-in-law whom the daughters have always at hand to criticise their doings, and whom the sons-in-law find an intolerable nuisance. Herr Rosefleur had, therefore, withdrawn unobserved with his little wife as soon as the marriage ceremony was performed. The mother-in-law is in a state of the greatest anxiety, and what worries her most of all is the fear that her flighty son-in-law will turn the mistake to his own advantage, repudiate the marriage, as he is in strict law entitled to do, and send back his wife. She therefore adopts every expedient to conceal from him the fact that the marriage is not legal. However, the son-in-law does not desire to part from his little Jeannette, and as soon as he understands the real state of affairs, he leads her again to the Mayor—this time the right one—and the pair are firmly united in the bonds of matrimony. The operetta is very well constructed, the music is good, and the reception was very favourable.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

Phryne, an opera, the music of which was composed by M. Saint-Saëns to the libretto of M. Augé de Lassus, was produced for the first time in Italy at the Lirico Internazionale, Milan, and the result leaves little room for doubt that the best of receptions is assured to it in whatever part of the country it may be presented. Madame Sanderson, who was the original Phryne when the opera first saw the light in Paris, again played the part of the heroine, and the remaining leading rôles were entrusted to Signori

Pini-Corsi and Pandelfini, and Signorine Passeri, Rogni, Lanza-vecchia, and Frigiotti. At the Manzoni, Milan, *Frate Agostino*, a one-act drama by Sig. E. C. Costamagna, made its first appearance in that city. Enrico Franchi, the central figure of the work, is a young medical student who is about to marry Margherita, an orphan girl brought up by his father, when he receives a message from her begging him to forget her, as she has resolved to enter a convent. Astounded by this sudden change of purpose, Enrico does all in his power to learn the reasons which gave rise to it, but all he can gather is that she thinks it unwise to marry him, because his mother was mad and committed suicide. Enrico then joins a monastic order, and, assuming the name of Frate Agostino, becomes a model priest and a devoted student. Several years pass by, when he unexpectedly receives a visit from his father, and learns from him that Margherita has just died, and also that the real ground for the girl's retirement from the world was a *liaison* with her guardian, his father. This news proves too much for the mental balance of the unfortunate Enrico, and he puts an end to his life with a dose of poison. It is not difficult to see in this little tragedy excellent material for something in the nature of a short story, but its plot can scarcely be regarded as appropriate to the stage, and doubtless it was the audience's appreciation of that important fact which condemned the play to a lukewarm welcome. *Il Disastro di Roccamore*, which was subsequently put on the stage of the same theatre, had rather a more unfavourable reception still, the authors, Signori Pozza and Bertolozzi, having to face decided demonstrations of dissatisfaction. *La Moglie Decorativa*, an Italian rendering of M. de Curel's *La Figurante*, a very French play of the matrimonial problem order, quite took the fancy of the audience at the Valle, Rome. The unsavoury story disclosed in the course of the plot hangs upon the marriage of De Moineville, an elderly man of science, with a young and frivolous woman who already has an *amant* in the person of M. de Renneval, an ambitious young politician. The marriage is not allowed to put an end to the relations between the wife and De Renneval, but the latter soon afterwards deems it necessary to his political progress that he should have a wife to assist him in social matters. Madame de Moineville manifests jealousy at the suggestion, but eventually matters are arranged by a young woman being found who is willing to marry De Renneval under the condition that she is to be to him nothing more than a *moglie decorativa*. The *moglie decorativa* is none other than the old scientist's niece, whom Madame de Moineville selects on account of her inexperience and

her spiritless temperament. Matters proceed according to this arrangement for a few months, during which Madame de Renneval is greatly improved by the social change which her life has undergone. De Renneval then realises that he entertains genuine affection for his wife, and wishes to renounce the condition which he has imposed upon her. To that, however, she will not agree unless at the same time he severs for ever his connection with Madame de Moineville. With his promise of faithfulness and the joy of the old scientist, who has had some inkling of what has been going on, the play comes to a happy termination. Signorina Virginia Reiter played the title rôle, Signor Belli-Blanes that of De Moineville, and Signor Andò that of De Renneval.

IN MADRID.

A new drama by Don Angel Guimerà made its appearance early in the month at the Teatro Español. Its title is *Tierra Baja* and it contains some excellent writing, but the opening scenes promise rather more than the development of the story actually affords. Sebastian, a farmer, who, while enjoying the reputation of a man of wealth, is, nevertheless, in financial difficulties, resolves to seek the hand of a certain heiress to large estates as a means of clearing his farm of the encumbrances by which he is hampered. His household already contains, however, a young woman, and the relatives of the heiress refuse their sanction to the projected marriage until Marta, this earlier companion, has found a husband. Sebastian at once casts about to remove the obstacle to his scheme, and eventually contrives, without revealing the relations which had existed between himself and Marta, to bring about the girl's marriage to Mannelich, an unsuspecting farm hand. The first act concludes with the celebration of this wedding, but before the curtain falls circumstances arise which give Mannelich an inkling of the plot of which he has been made the victim. In the second act Mannelich discovers the whole affair and seeks vengeance on Sebastian, but is restrained by a number of his fellow-labourers. His wife, for some reason which is not evident, remains throughout the act in the farmer's house, and in the concluding act Sebastian suggests to her the resumption of their former domestic relations. Marta, however, is resolved to be faithful to her husband, and Sebastian is on the point of resorting to violence when Mannelich enters to demand his wife. Knives are immediately drawn, and a duel takes place, which ends in the death of Sebastian, the curtain descending

with the exultant cry of Mannelich, "I have slain the wolf!" The leading parts of the play were excellently rendered by Señoras Guerrero and Kuiz and Señores Diaz de Mendoza and Garcia Ortega, and the author received numerous congratulations on the success which the play achieved. *El Señor Feudal*, a new drama from the pen of Señor Dicenta, the author of *Juan José*, was produced at the Comedia, but it proved a disappointment to those who looked for something of the calibre of its predecessor, and it is extremely doubtful whether *El Señor Feudal* at all helps to maintain the author's high reputation as a dramatist. The first act dragged considerably, and it was not until the second was well on its way that the audience was at all favourably moved.

IN NEW YORK.

The dramatic events of the past month have been more than usually interesting from the English point of view. Mr. Willard, Mr. Tree, and Mr. Arthur Bouchier have all appeared here with varying degrees of success. Mr. H. V. Esmond seems determined, in spite of the critics, to win recognition for his powers as a dramatist, his latest play being well interpreted by a company with Miss Olga Nethersole at its head. Miss Ada Rehan has appeared for the first time in New York as Lady Gay Spanker; a new opera upon the subject of Andrea Chenier has been presented to the American public, and Mr. Richard Mansfield has shown that he has lost none of his old-time grip of the character of Richard III. Mr. Tree began his season with his much paragraphed play, *The Seats of the Mighty*. The piece is, as Mr. Tree has confessed, very crude. Svengali in the book was next to nothing, but on the stage was everything. Here the reverse is the case. The villian, the polished wit, and the unvarnished human-nature of Doltaire stands forth in the book with a sublimity that is only its own. Translated to the stage, he becomes a coarse, vulgar, inconsistent trickster, and not even the full resources of Mr. Tree's talent, exercised, as they plainly were, to their fullest extent, could make the character any different. The play follows the lines of the story rather closely, but a deadly dullness pervades the five acts. Miss Kate Rorke was very impressive, and at one or two moments there was the possibility that she might save the impending fate. But it was not to be. Mr. Tree's next appearance was in *The Danciny Girl*, not perhaps the wisest possible selection, for it is not very long ago that a favourite American actor, Mr. E. H. Sothorn, appeared in this play. The impersonation of the Duke of Guisebery by Mr

Tree was a fine piece of acting, but the native player was inevitably preferred to the foreigner. As a curtain raiser to *The Dancing Girl* Mr. Tree played the Gad's Hill and Boar's Head scenes from *Henry IV.*, and therein achieved the largest share of applause yet given him. Signor Luigi Mica's opera of *Andrea Chenier* has been produced by Colonel Mapleson at the Academy of Music. Though he is certainly not a composer of the highest order, Signor Mica's work has been received as though it were really great. It is fine, but not great. Mme. Bonaplata-Bau deserved quite half the plaudits bestowed upon the fortunate composer. *Les Deux Gosses* is adapted for the American stage by Mr. Charles Klein, who has christened his work *The Two Little Vagrants*. His work was skilfully done, and the play seems likely to repeat here its success in Paris and in London. Mr. Arthur Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh have appeared in *The Chili Widow* and *The Queen's Proctor* with very gratifying results. Mr. Maurice Barrymore has scored a distinct hit by his performance of Dick Pontifex in a play from his own pen, entitled *Roaring Dick and Co.* The construction of the play leaves, perhaps, something to be desired; but many of the lines are distinctly funny. Mr. W. J. Le Moyne gave another of his wonderful old-men studies. Mr. Willard is always sure of an enthusiastic welcome when he comes over from England; but when he brings with him so strong a play as *The Rogue's Comedy* his welcome must be increased tenfold. Why the play failed to secure a long run in London is one of those mysteries that may never be solved, for certain it is that Mr. H. A. Jones' latest play shows no sign of deteriorating power. From beginning to end it is a powerful character study, and in Mr. Willard's hands it becomes absolutely enthralling. Miss Olga Brandon's performance of Miss Dennison was very telling. Not yet has Mr. H. V. Esmond shown us the work which we are all expecting from him. His latest play, *The Courtship of Leonie*, starts with a wildly improbable incident of a somewhat Adelphian flavour, and the subsequent story is not developed with the amount of skill that one might have expected even from the author of *The Divided Way*. Still, there is much evidence of talent in the play, notably in the short crisp dialogue of the highly dramatic moments. Mr. J. K. Hackett played the leading part, being assisted by a rather mediocre company.

Echoes from the Green Room.

THE Lyceum revival of *Richard III.* had scarcely achieved its great success when it had to be stopped. Sir Henry Irving, owing to a severe sprain, found it necessary to lie up for some days. In all probability, we are glad to hear, the performances will soon be resumed.

ONE evening, over his eternal pipe, the late Lord Tennyson discussed the merits of Sir Henry Irving's *Richard III.* "I often wonder," he said, "how he gets his distinctively *Plantagenet* look." Perhaps the best illustration of that look is in Edwin Long's portrait, first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1878, and now in the possession of Lady Burdett-Coutts. It represents the actor's *Richard* standing, absorbed in gigantic thought, unconsciously toying with a ring on his finger, and with a slight but sardonic smile upon his countenance.

THE cast of Sir Henry Irving's first revival of *Richard III.* at the Lyceum has points of interest quite apart from the representation of the leading personage. It included two young actors who have left the stage to become successful dramatists—Mr. Pinero (*Sir William Stanley*) and Mr. R. C. Carton (*Lord Rivers*).

THERE was a full audience at the Lyceum on November 25th, when Sir Henry Irving revived *The Bells* in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the production there of that play. Responding to a call for a speech, he paid a tribute to the late Mr. H. L. Bateman, his manager in those old days. After the performance he had a complete surprise, the whole of the company, from the highest to the lowest, asking him to accept a mediæval silver bell designed by Mr. Alfred Gilbert. Sir Henry, evidently much touched, returned thanks for this homage in a few words, in the course of which he spoke of the harmony that had so long subsisted among the whole company at the Lyceum.

MR. MORTON FULLERTON, one of the cleverest representatives in Paris of the English press, has favoured us, it will be seen, with an indirect account of the fête in honour of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt. Possibly it may be thought that he does not take a sufficiently serious view of this "journée de Sarah," the most unique event of its kind in purely theatrical history. First came a *déjeuner* at the Grand Hôtel, the company, about six hundred in number, including all that is most conspicuous in the French intellect of the hour. M. Sardou proposed the health of the actress, "no less good than great." Mme. Bernhardt, too full of emotion really to speak, sobbed out a "Merci, merci, merci!" Under the direction of M. Colonne, an orchestra struck up a "hymne à Sarah," which was rapturously applauded. On the same day, at the Renaissance Theatre, Mme. Bernhardt, facing a full and splendid audience, appeared in the second act of *Phèdre* and the fourth act of *Rome Vaincue*. Her impersonation of the grandmother in the latter piece has always appeared to us one of the miracles of her art. Afterwards, on a sort of throne, surrounded with flowers, she received

several delegations, and a few sonnets in her honour were recited. The crowd outside, as at the Grand Hôtel, was tremendous.

Not a few of the congratulatory telegrams poured upon the actress were from English players. Sir Henry Irving wrote:—"Your brother and sister actors of the Lyceum Theatre send you their love and greeting. All the arts do you homage, and we, your comrades in another country, where your genius is held in such high esteem, are happy to add our tribute to the great honour you merit." Mr. Wilson Barrett's homage took the form of a silver wreath, on the leaves of which the names of the chief parts created by the actress are to be inscribed. Other telegrams were from Madame Réjane, Madame Melba, Madame Emma Calvé, the brothers de Reszke, the St. Petersburg students, and Signor d'Annunzio, the last of whom, speaking for Italy, termed her the "never-to-be-forgotten enchantress."

ONLY one thing was wanting to the success of this singular celebration. Mme. Bernhardt did not receive the distinction of the Legion of Honour—a distinction she has greatly coveted for many years.

M. MAYER has concluded an arrangement with Mme. Sarah Bernhardt for his thirtieth season in London.

ALTHOUGH no definite arrangements have yet been made, there is reason to believe that there will be an opera season in London next spring.

DR. IBSEN's new play, *John Gabriel Borkman*, is about to appear simultaneously in Norwegian, English, French, German, and Russian.

M. SAINT SAENS has left Paris for Barcelona and Madrid, there to see representations of his *Samson et Delila*. Probably he will go on to the Canaries, if not to St. Helena. He is expected to return to Paris in May.

MME. DE RESZKE did not accompany her husband on his recent voyage to America, but will probably rejoin him there before long.

THE *Sign of the Cross*, the novel founded by Mr. Wilson Barrett on his play, has been issued by Mr. Macqueen. The Bishop of Truro contributes a preface, and several of the religious papers have extended to the work a cordial welcome. The *Christian World* speaks of it as "a phenomenon of our times, the influence of which, we believe, is wholly for good. Are we to have a revival of the Mystery?"

SIGNORA DUSE has again been in Berlin, and was met there with the best of receptions. One of her pieces was *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

It is not true that Signor Verdi is making an opera on the basis of *The Tempest* or *King Lear*. In his own words, he is simply composing an oratorio for his own amusement, as he detests idleness.

MR. E. S. WILLARD, beginning at Boston on November 16th, is doing well in America with *The Rogue's Comedy*.

MME. EMMA CALVE has arrived in New York from Europe.

MME. NORDICA has started on a concert tour in the United States.

MR. WYNDHAM has gone to the Engadine for a brief holiday. In his absence *Betsy* will be revived at the Criterion in place of *Rosemary*, the cast including Mr. Alfred Bishop, Miss Annie Hughes, Mr. J. H. Barnes, and Mr. James Welch.

MR. TOOLE, after yet another most successful provincial tour, is taking a needed and well-deserved rest. It is not likely that he will reappear on the stage just yet. He has even been proof against an invitation from Mr. George Alexander to play Caleb Plummer at the St. James's.

A Man About Town is the title of a musical farce to be produced by Mr. Brockwell and Mr. E. J. Lonnen at the close of the year.

MISS HILDA SPONG, who made so marked a success in *The Duchess of Coolgardie* at Drury Lane, is now playing Mrs. Thornton in *The Two Vagabonds*.

THE London correspondent of *Le Monde Artiste* has many pleasant things to say of *Under the Red Robe*, especially as regards the performance. "M. Waring," he writes, "a prêté au rôle de Gil toutes les qualités qui font de lui un très grand artiste, et le cardinal de M. Valentine nous a fait revivre dans le grand siècle. Mlle. Winifred Emery, la sympathique épouse de M. Cyril Maude, l'acteur-directeur du Haymarket, a fait vibrer toutes les notes de la gamme humaine dans le rôle si intense de Renée de la Cocheforêt. Miss Eva Moore (Mme. de la Cocheforêt) est toute charmante comme épouse ingénue dont la jeunesse et la timidité lui enjoignent de se reposer sur la vaillante belle-sœur, son soutien et son espoir. Dans un an d'ici, Londres remplira la salle du Haymarket, sans que l'affiche ait subi aucun changement."

ALL his friends and, indeed, all playgoers will sympathise with Mr. Charles Brookfield in the loss of his mother, the wife of the late Rev. W. H. Brookfield, chaplain-in-ordinary to the Queen, and a daughter of Sir Charles Elton, of Clevedon Court, Somerset. Mrs. Brookfield was a remarkable woman, with a singular charm of personality, and had been one of Thackeray's closest friends, having known also Lord Tennyson, the Carlyles, and many other bearers of great names in the world of letters. Some of Thackeray's most characteristic and therefore most delightful letters were addressed to Mrs. Brookfield, whose other son is Colonel Brookfield, the well-known member of Parliament for the Rye Division.

EVERYONE will be sorry to hear that Mr. W. Lestocq has been ill, and is ordered to take a sea voyage. Our best wishes for his speedy recovery go with him. So energetic a worker in many good causes, and so clever an actor and playwright, can ill be spared from the active list.

STAGE names are often rather confusing in their resemblances to one another. Many people, for instance, firmly believe that Mr. Edward Terry is own brother to Miss Ellen Terry, and would not relinquish this assurance for a world of argument and proof. Now the appearance is announced of Miss Ellaline Terry (a member of the great Terry family), who is to appear in *Boots at the Holly Tree*, and who will inevitably be mistaken by numbers of well-intentioned folk for Miss Ellaline Terriss. Could not there be some system by which all names would have to be registered at Stationers' Hall, care being taken that no pair should be too much alike?

Napoleon's Opera Glass, by Mr. Lew Rosen, is an interesting little book. The writer is not content with showing how great was Napoleon's interest in all things theatrical, and how he took an active part in regulating the affairs of the national home of drama, but devotes himself also to emphasising the histrionic side of the great man's character and achievements. Napoleon's literary judgment may be judged from the fact that he thought Shakspeare wrote "pitiful stuff," and ranked him far below Corneille and Racine. The excuse for him probably is that he knew Shakspeare only in French perversions—the same sort of thing as the famous translation in which the witches' "All hail, Macbeth!" came out as "Bonjour, Monsieur Macbeth," for all the world as if the "blasted heath" were the Rue de Rivoli or Pall Mall.

THE Actors' Orphanage Fund, in aid of which the theatrical bazaar was held in July at Queen's Hall, is beginning to take definite shape and proportions. Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry will be president and vice-president respectively, and soon after Christmas a meeting of the recently-formed executive committee will be held so that plans may be made for laying out the fund to the best advantage.

THE performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* which the Elizabethan Stage Society gave in Merchant Taylors' Hall on November 28th was interesting, if only on account of the fact that it was the first dramatic representation given under the roof of a City Guild for the best part of two centuries. After the manner of the Society, there was no scenery—not even placards to indicate the locality of the action, and the costumes were such as the original players of the comedy may be presumed to have worn. The acting left a great deal to be desired, and in this respect the performance was quite the least successful the society have yet given. Some charming music was performed by Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch and his little band of performers upon the virginal and the viols. A distinguished audience was gathered together, but the only thing which moved them to anything like enthusiasm was the appearance of the outlaws, a company of magnificently-proportioned men, handsome, stalwart, and most picturesquely attired. Mr. William Poel hopes to induce other City companies to lend their halls for a similar purpose, but he must look to it that his players are more efficient than they were on this occasion.

"I SEND you," a correspondent writes to us, "with reference to the latest Ibsen production, a verse (written down from memory) that has been added to the popular 'Lady Tom' song in *My Girl*. It sounds rather improper, but is not half so bad as the revolting passage in *Little Eyolf* to which it refers. It goes something like this:—

" 'I'll ask Mr. Ibsen to write another play,
And then I will perform it at a special matinée.
We'll have no naughty naughty plays from wicked France or Spain,
But ladies on the sofa and extra dry champagne !
The rest, dear Mr. Archer will explain ! ' "

THE quarrels that have agitated the Odéon are now over, for M. Antoine has retired, leaving M. Ginisty sole manager. M. Antoine has soon found other occupation, having had a good offering to undertake a tour through Europe with a company of his own. M. Ginisty is setting to work energetically to restore the Odéon to his old place in popular favour.

Charley's Aunt, after a run exceeding that of *Our Boys*, has at length been put aside. Its place is taken by *Jedbury Junior*, produced at Terry's early this year in a condensed form, but now given very much as it was originally seen in America. Miss Aumonier and Mr. Reeves Smith will probably make the success of the revival by their acting in the principal parts.

M. GUITRY does not appear in M. Sardou's new piece at the Renaissance, *Spiritisme*, with Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, nominally because he needs rest, but really on the ground that he dislikes the part allotted to him.

M. RICHEFIN'S *Le Chemineau*, rejected by the Comédie Française as too realistic, has been accepted at the Odéon.

FROM 1689, about nine years after its birth, until 1770, when it was

transferred to the Tuileries, the Théâtre Français was on the south side of the Seine, in what is now called the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie. The site—opposite that of the famous Café Procope—was lately sold in Paris for 285,000f. “The King’s players of 1770,” says Mr. Frederick Hawkins, in his *French Stage in the Eighteenth Century*, “could not have made the change without a deep sentimental regret. Henri Quatre’s favourite tennis court had gathered to itself a thousand literary and artistic memories. It had been associated for eighty-one years with the varying fortunes of the Comédiens du Roi. It had been the scene of many splendid triumphs, of many disheartening reverses. It had been the home of the players who made French acting a household word throughout civilised Europe. It had been the means of introducing to the public the most monumental of the plays written during its existence as a theatre. Its audiences had from the outset included the flower of intellect and culture and rank. It had witnessed an infusion of new warmth and colouring into tragedy, the development of pathetic comedy, and the introduction of a species of the drama which, in harmony with the altered spirit of the time, sought to promote the cause of social reform. Moreover, if walls could speak, what a bright story might those of the green-room in that theatre have told—stories of brilliant gatherings there every night since the days of Mme. de Maintenon, the peer meeting the brain-worker on a footing of equality, each of the company knowing everybody else, and the conversation abounding in that refined wit which forms the most distinctive feature of the time when men wore wigs and ruffles and swords. Racine, Lafontaine, Boileau, Molière’s wife, Lafosse, Regnard, Fontenelle, Dancourt, Baron, Dufresny, Brueys, Palaprat, Mlle. Duclos, Legrand, Crébillon, Mlle. Desmares, Boursault, Lamotte, Lesage, Destouches, the Quinaults, Adrienne Lecouvreur, Voltaire, Marivaux, Marie Dangeville, Armand, Piron, Jeanne Gaussin, Panard, Marie Dumesnil, Lachaussée, Gresset, Clairon, Lekain, Bellecourt, Palissot, Préville, Molé, Brizard, Diderot, Laharpe, Collé, Sédaine, Beaumarchais,—these, among many others, had joined the circle in the *foyer* as time passed on, the earliest of the names taking us back to the best years of the Golden Age. Such a link with the past was not to be resigned without regret. But the players had a substantial recompense for their loss in being allowed to take possession of the *salle* at the Tuileries, where they appeared on the 24th of April. For this *salle* (lately the seat of the Opéra) was that erected by Vigarini in 1671 for the representation of *Psyché*, and the fact that Molière had set foot in it did not escape the men and women who were so proud to call themselves ‘his children.’”

MME. BARTET, of the Comédie Française, has lost her son, a young naval officer. He died last month.

BEFORE a full audience, composed mainly of Englishmen and Americans, Mlle. Van Zandt successfully reappeared at the Paris Opéra Comique last month, after thirteen years of what a chronicler calls an absence “non moins regrettable que forcée.”

MADAME MARIE KOLB, the soubrette, has reappeared at the Odéon, after a long absence in the provinces.

HERR HUMPERDINCK’S sister, who helped him in the libretto of *Hansel and Gretel*, has finished a musical comedy of the same kind, the score entirely by herself.

HERR LUDWIG BARNAY, the great German tragedian, will perhaps be induced now to reconsider his intention of retiring altogether from the stage,

After an absence of some little time he reappeared in Berlin the other night, and his King Lear met with so magnificent a reception that he declared he had been wrong in thinking his day to be over, and that the enthusiasm his playing evoked had given him courage to continue. It is a woeful mistake for an actor to "lag superfluous," but Herr Barnay is not likely to reach that stage for many a day to come.

EVEN a people used to arbitrary government will assert themselves in the theatre. Lately, in Berlin, two Schiller prizes for dramatic construction were awarded to Herr Hauptmann. The German Emperor overruled this award, bestowing the prizes on Herr Wildendruck. This stroke of authority has led to more than one significant demonstration on the part of audiences. Herr Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* has been received with enthusiasm, and Herr Wildendruck's *Kaiser Heinrich*, though ostentatiously patronised by the Emperor, with a less marked approval.

IBSEN was not always the serious, melancholic student of morbid psychology that he would appear, from his plays to be to-day. Even he was once young, noisy, enthusiastic, as it is the wont of youth to be. A lady who has been writing her "Recollections" in the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung* tells how Henrik once formed one of a youthful picnic party on the Ulrik rock. Breakfast was eaten at the top; music resounded, and Ibsen, standing in the middle on the rock, declaimed an improvised poem to—happiness and joy! Time passed, and Ibsen left Bergen. There were perhaps few who missed him. Some years later, on the occasion of the great choral festival, he returned, and was among the singers. Before the arrival of the singers, lists had been prepared with the names of the visitors upon them, so that the hosts might choose and inscribe their names against those of the guests they might wish to entertain. The space opposite Ibsen's name remained vacant till the last; he was the last to find a host. When he was next in Bergen he had become famous, and in order to get any time at all for repose he had to refuse the honours and invitations which people wished to press upon him.

MR. JEFFERSON again denies a rumour that he intends to retire from the stage. "When I do retire," he says, "it shall be after it has been announced to the public, and I shall not make the announcement as long as I have health."

COLONEL MAPLESON'S Opera company, owing to the force of circumstances, has been disbanded at Boston. There would seem to be insufficient room for two such organisations in America.

MR. RICHARD MANSFIELD has in hand a dramatic version of Miss Jessie Fothergill's novel, *The First Violin*.

MR. AUGUSTE VAN BIENE'S delight at his reception in New York is not wholly without alloy. "I have only one fault," he said to the audience on the closing night, "to find in my reception here, and that is with the newspaper critics, who have taken exception of my personal appearance. I came to America as an actor and a musician, not as a professional beauty. Had I posed as the latter, I do not believe that your Government would have permitted me to land."

Is it a fact that married actresses injure their popularity by taking their husbands' names, by substituting the "Mrs." for the "Miss?" Incredible as it may seem, this question had to be determined the other day by an American court of law. Mr. Howe, the manager of the Walnut-street

Theatre, Philadelphia, refused to fulfil a contract with Miss Julia Marlowe on the ground that she insisted upon being advertised as Mrs. Julia Marlowe [Taber. She brought an action against him for her salary, and was successful.

MR. A. M. PALMER has been seriously ill.

SENOR NICOLÒ BARILLI, Mme. Patti's half brother, died recently in New York, at the age of seventy. He studied music at Rome in early life, went to America more than forty years ago, and appeared as a basso at the Academy of Music. To the end he was carefully cared for by his half sister

QUITE a pleasant flutter of excitement has recently passed over the Ladies' Club, New York. Mr. Stephen Fiske, one of the ablest of American journalists, was informed that he had been made "King of Bohemia." This has been described as "the proudest position in the world," as "no other kingdom can boast that all its people are devoted to literature and the arts." By the way, when is Mr. Fiske to pay us another visit? He may rely upon the most cordial of welcomes.

MISS LILLIAN RUSSELL will not be heard again in New York until February.

IN *Under the Red Robe*, to be produced at the Empire Theatre, New York, towards the end of December, Mr. J. E. Dodson, who has obtained a distinguished position in his profession, will play Richelieu.

"*The Theatre*," says the *New York Spirit of the Times*, speaking of our November number, "contains photographs of Miss Millward and Mr. Abingdon. These *Theatre* portraits are unequalled. They are not advertising; no money is taken for them; it is not required that a certain number of the magazine shall be purchased. The editor selects the photographs as he would any other matter, and they thus have a double value as works of art and as tributes to excellent acting. The literary contents of *The Theatre* are up to its highest standard. No profession, dramatic or musical, can afford to do without *The Theatre* monthly."


THACKERAY's works do not usually lend themselves to stage purposes, but it is no less true that Mr. E. H. Sothorn is about to produce in America an adaptation of *Esmond*.

THE THEATRE.

FEBRUARY, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

THE ONSLAUGHT UPON THE PLAYER.



THAT there has been something of this sort of late there can be no doubt. It has not been very widespread, nor very deep, but it has been perceptible, nevertheless, in certain quarters. It has not been manifested in "society" or in general talk, but has made itself known and felt in a few literary and journalistic circles. One has found signs of it, for example, within the covers of a magazine most notable for its eccentric shape; in a twopenny weekly, and in a halfpenny daily. One restless scribe has returned to the charge more than half a dozen times, so overpowering is his enthusiasm, so overwhelming his industry. He must have spent hours—this excitable gentleman—and have covered reams of paper in his attempt to prove that players are beneath his, or anybody else's, notice. He has brought up some very heavy artillery indeed to disperse an enemy he has affected to despise. Others, less elaborate and portentous in their methods, have contented themselves with hinting faults and hesitating dislike; they have not only sneered themselves, but "taught the rest to sneer."

And for what reason? What has been the cause of all this distribution of venom? Why this little epidemic of depreciation? Well, the excuse put forward is the abnormal popularity of the player. Actors and actresses, we are told, are too much in evidence outside the theatre. Too much notice is taken of them; they are too much talked about. They figure unduly in the papers; they are too often "interviewed;" their portraits are too frequently exploited. You cannot take up a periodical—daily, weekly, or monthly—in which they are not referred to. In fact (so goes the cry), they are positively more before the public than any other section of the community—more, even, than party politicians; more, even, than local County Councillors. And this, it is urged, cannot but be bad for them as well as for the commonwealth; it must needs induce and feed the complaint known as "swollen head," which is good neither for them nor for those with whom they come in contact. And then

comes a renewal of the good old gibes—about the player's inevitable Bohemianism, about the unsystematic nature of his training, about the necessary dulling of his sympathies, about this and that and the other—ghosts which have been laid, and which have risen again, times without number.

For these publicists persistently forget that, if the player occupies at present a very large space in the eye of "society," the fact is due to none more obviously than to themselves. To whom do we owe the flood of "interviews," and pictures, and so forth, for which the actor is blamed, if not to the very class which now professes to reprobate them? That no player is ever guilty of a little self-advertisement who shall say? But why should we regard as a crime in him what is freely and genially permitted to every other public person? "Push" is a quality not confined to any one body of men and women. The desirability of keeping themselves well to the fore is recognised by potent statesmen as well as by tradesmen, by ambitious soldiers and sailors as well as by company promoters, by popular novelists as well as by the vendors of quack nostrums. And if a player should now and then paragraph himself a little more than circumstances seem to warrant, need we be so very hard upon so venial a performance? Of this we may be sure—that there is very little occasion nowadays for an actor to thrust himself into notice. The thing is done for him. It is not, nowadays, the player who begs for a measure of publicity; it is the publicists who insist upon dragging him into the open. It is the magazinist and the journalist who are mainly responsible for the prominence everywhere accorded to "the profession;" it is they who ask for the "interviews" and pocket the photographs which we find recorded and reproduced in all directions. Wherefore, it seems rather ungracious on the part of such writers that they should censure a condition of things which they have done their best to bring about. It would seem as if they were possessed with a desire to pull down the idols which they have themselves assisted to set up.

What seems to irritate most keenly the censors of the player is the fact that he is now so much seen in "society"—that he is received and welcomed everywhere, as if he were as little of a "vagabond" as are the members of the so-called "learned" professions. The truth is, of course, that the actor never was, legally or actually, a "vagabond." The only vagabonds were those hangers-on of the profession who had no license to act, who belonged to no recognised troupe of players, and who yet would insist upon pitching their tent wheresoever they listed. There is every reason to believe that the

Elizabethan actor had an enviable place in the social system of his time. Acting was distinctly acknowledged as a profession, or as a reputable, honourable "calling," if the word be preferred. The player as well as the tradesman was allowed to have apprentices. The leading actors of the day were evidently on intimate terms with the educated and the titled classes. In all probability Shakspeare moved, when he thought proper, in very good society. University men did not think it *infra dig.* to write for the stage, and a certain percentage of them did not hesitate to figure on the boards. The Puritan revolution temporarily discredited the player, but when the Stuarts returned he regained the vantage he had lost. There is evidence that Betterton was highly esteemed in royal and aristocratic circles ; it is recorded that he went, by authority, to Paris to inquire into the theatrical methods of the French. We know that Garrick was the friend and associate of the most brilliant men of the period, who treated him as their equal intellectually and socially. We know that the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons were admitted to the best society of their generation. We know that Macready had the regard and admiration of the cream of his contemporaries ; that he was the intimate of Bulwer, and that he was praised in verse by Tennyson. And in this, as in other respects, the traditions of Macready were well maintained by Charles Kean.

All the great actors have been "in society." What is characteristic of our own era, and what appears to stick most poignantly in the gizzard of some publicists, is the fact that players as a body, as a class, as a profession, have now a social position higher and more firm than has ever been their lot before. It is not only that our leading players dine with royalty, and entertain the most exclusive people ; it is not only that the heads of the calling are on terms of familiarity with "the best ;" it is that, for the first time in the history of histrionics in this country, acting is regarded—not merely here and there, but more or less generally—as a profession to be adopted as one adopts Medicine, Law, or the Church, the Army, the Navy, or the Civil Service. The stage is no longer wholly or even mainly the refuge of those who have tried other callings, and disliked them or failed in them ; it is no longer the sanctuary of the born and incurable Bohemian—the Alsatia of art and of society. It takes rank as a profession respectable in itself, and presenting as fair opportunities as any other for personal advancement. As in the days of Elizabeth, men go straight from the University on to the boards. But even more remarkable are the constant accessions from those prudent and practical middle-classes which were wont to look upon the theatre as the chosen abode of extravagance

and poverty. Young men and women of good education and position study for the stage as their predecessors studied for less picturesque careers, and their pastors and masters offer no opposition. Acting is recognised not only as a reputable but as a practical and remunerative occupation, to which parents may allow their children to devote themselves as to any other that could be named. The stigma has been removed from the art of the player, and he is no longer treated as an Ishmael or a pariah.

In arriving at this point, the profession of acting is but sharing in an advance which has been made "all along the line." Even the "learned" professions did not always enjoy the esteem and respect now accorded to them. Time was when the surgeon was thought to be only a little higher in the social scale than the mere barber. It is not so very, very long since a chaplain in a noble family was considered to be appropriately mated when he paired off with my lady's maid. No such slights are now offered to our parsons and our doctors; why should the players be made the targets for attack, because they, too, have vindicated their right to respect and to esteem? Why this sudden exhibition of hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness? Well, we suppose it is the inevitable reaction from the praises and congratulations of the immediate past. While, on the one hand, all genuine lovers of the stage, all real patriots, all careful observers, and all acute thinkers, have welcomed the change which has come of late years over the actor's dream, on the other there has been, in a number of obscure corners, a certain dissatisfaction with the development of events. The common stage-player accepted as an artist—as one of a class worthy to be associated on equal social terms, not only with the musician and the painter, but with the lawyer and the cleric!—can such things be? As Tennyson once wrote:

What with spites and what with fears,
You cannot let a body be;
It's always ringing in your ears,
"They call this man as good as *me*."

But, as the late Laureate also said:

Men of long-enduring hopes
And careless what the hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes
And Brummells when they try to sting.

The "dead set" to which we have referred is just what might be expected to follow upon the long upward movement taken of recent years by the histrionic profession. Progress of that sort is bound to be met by some in a spirit of vulgar and narrow-minded detraction—a spirit which does far more harm to those who are inspired by it than to those against whom it is directed.



Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.

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MISS COMPTON.

Portraits.

MISS COMPTON.

SINCE she comes of so famous a theatrical family, it would have seemed strange if Miss Compton, having decided from inclination to become an actress, had not shown herself the possessor of more than common talent, and gained a distinguished place in the profession of her choice. Yet it is not very often that the player bred in an atmosphere of tradition wins success in essentially modern lines of study. Miss Compton has this double advantage—that, while she has undergone a thorough dramatic training in the classics of the stage, she is quite capable, as were the actresses of the older school, of playing, with acceptance, any kind of part from high tragedy to the lightest of light comedy or farce. She has also mastered what may be termed the “modern method,” and can hold her own with the cleverest of its exponents in subtle suggestion of character, and in representing with remarkable fidelity types of the moment whose follies and affectations afford the dramatist fair game. In her husband’s very entertaining play, *A White Elephant*, she makes Lady Gwendoline Ogden a most amusing and at the same time a most lifelike figure. Mr. R. C. Carton has drawn the character carefully and well, but there are very few actresses whom one can imagine playing it with the sure touch of Mrs. Carton, indicating so cleverly the indolent good nature, the placid foolishness and lack of decision, which land Lady Gwendoline in such unfortunate predicaments. It was in a play partly written by Mr. Carton that Miss Compton made her first decided creative success. *The Great Pink Pearl*, produced in 1885, gave her the “broken English” part of a Russian princess, and her acting won high praise, which was repeated when she created Mrs. Bute Curzon in her husband’s *Robin Goodfellow*. Unfortunately, the piece failed to attract, and not many people had the opportunity of seeing the clever acting for which it gave opportunities. Before her appearance in *The Great Pink Pearl*, Miss Compton had been playing in London for the most part the stock characters in the classic and romantic drama. Her early experience in the country had well fitted her to undertake such tasks, but it is her later efforts in the comedy of the day that have really given her a high place, and we only express the feelings of all who have enjoyed her performance in *A White Elephant* when we allow ourselves to hope that she may not in the near future be so much absent from the stage as she has been in the late past.

The Round Table.

THE QUINTESSENCE OF IMPUDENCE.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

THE quintessence of impudence is surely reached, when the self-constituted judges of the modern Drama reproach that popular form of Art with its inferiority to the masterpieces of contemporary fiction! Even Mr. Zangwill, who ought to know better, eulogises story-writing at the expense of playwriting, one of his most extraordinary contentions being that a story *must* be better and nobler than a play, because (*mirabile dictu*!) it takes so much longer to write! There is, in my opinion, quite as much disingenuousness as foolishness in the sort of utterance to which I am alluding; the result, unfortunately, being to prejudice "superior" people against a form of entertainment which they do not care to study at the fountain-head. It is necessary to point out, therefore, that the perfervid denunciations of the products of the modern stage are made, almost invariably, either by literary men who have failed to write successful plays, or by critics who regard the theatre as a vehicle for the diffusion of their own fanaticism. In point of fact, modern dramatic literature, unfortunate as are the conditions under which it is produced, is in quite as healthy a state as the Literature which is not dramatic and which assumes the privilege of spelling itself with a capital L. The poorest sort of "well-made" Play must be to a certain extent a work of art, in so far as it must be fashioned under more or less artistic restrictions, while the modern Story or Novel is, under any circumstances, the most formless and inchoate structure as yet tolerated or spared by destructive criticism. The very best fiction we possess bears the same relation to the highest literature that a daily paper does to a poem or a statue; that is to say, it is interesting and amusing only in so far as it is disconnected, episodic, and unconditioned.

This conception of prose fiction, however, is a matter of personal opinion and may easily be disputed; but no one, I imagine, will care to contend that the fiction which now floods the market, and which fills the book lists of even the most enlightened publishers, has any claim whatever to be seriously considered. That the writers on newspapers consider it seriously, proves merely

that it is in great demand by a public which has not yet acquired a taste for shapen literature—that is to say, by newspaper readers. In some journals, which are notoriously indifferent to Art in any form, whole columns are devoted to the discussion of trashy novels, and conceited writers discuss some ephemeral fantasy of the lady-novelist, or the gentleman-storyteller, as if it were an epoch-making masterpiece of the literary intelligence. Encouraged by the appetite of the public for shapeless tales and novelettes, and by the lazy acquiescence of the serious critic, the ladies and gentlemen who write with ease for those who run and read have at last persuaded themselves that they are, as artists, distinctly superior to the dramatic poet and the prose dramatist. Even Miss Marie Corelli has nothing but scorn for the theatre! The veriest tyro in story-writing, the merest amateur in anecdote-telling, thinks himself justified in despising the highest and most difficult of all arts, that of writing for the Stage.

The year which has just passed has not been a sunny one for dramatists, and possibly, as a well-known critic has pointed out, there has been a blight on the Drama. But dismal as the theatrical outlook has been, it has compared favourably with the outlook on Literature. If I am to accept the dicta of the so-called critical journals, the one “masterpiece” of recent fiction has been an unfinished story of the late Mr. Stevenson—*Weir of Ormiston*—a work which, we are assured by Mr. Sydney Colvin, holds “the highest place” among the writings of its author. Towards this “masterpiece” the whole tribe of critics has assumed a tone of extraordinary reverence, quite in keeping with the strange critical delusion that Stevenson was a great writer. This is neither the time nor the place to prick an overblown literary bubble; but the simple fact of the matter is, that the work in question, carefully examined, turns out to be a crude and singularly coarse schoolboy exercise, without one original note, without real virility, without adequacy of conception or individuality of execution. On the other hand, if I am to take great popularity as my criterion, the hugest successes of recent times have been *The Sorrows of Satan* and *The Mighty Atom*, books which have sold their hundreds of thousands. And, putting aside fiction for a moment, what other offering has Literature given us? For poetry, we have had the raucous cry of the Cockney-Jingo, in a collection of ballads worthy of the worst instincts of the naked savage; for philosophy, we have had Mr. Balfour’s audacious attempt to construct out of old materials a workable creed for his uncle; for theology, we have had Mr. Gladstone on Butler, and Canon Farrar on

the Christian musical glasses; and for popular *belles lettres*, we have had the poet-laureate's account of his back-garden, and the Penny Classics as appraised by Mr. Stead!

It is time, I think, for the dramatist, twitted with the difficulties of his occupation, and assured on every hand that he is outside the pale of Literature, to stand up and cry "Tu quoque!" Personally, I would far rather have written the first act of *Money* or the last act of *Judah*, the best parts of *Arrah-na-pogue*, or the worst parts of *Masks and Faces*, than I would have fathered some of the luminous masterpieces of the modern circulating library. There is in one scene of *Two Little Vagabonds*, now running at the Princess's Theatre, a power of sympathetic pathos not to be discovered, so far as I am aware, in any recent work of prose fiction; and if this power is not "literary," I should be glad of a new definition of what literary power is. *Au reste*, to twit a playwright with his inadequacy, while assuring him that his highest ambition should be to please the critics who see genius in *Weir of Ormiston*, or to succeed with the masses who devour *The Sorrows of Satan*, is, as I began by saying, merely the quintessence of impudence.

PLAYS WITHOUT WORDS.

BY JOSEPH KNIGHT.

SO little knowledge concerning dramatic history prevails, that the plays without words which have lately been transported from France to England have been generally regarded as novelties. They furnish, in fact, an edifying illustration of the truth, *Nihil sub sole novum* ("There is no new thing under the sun"). From the earliest recorded times of the drama, since we have practically no available information concerning the Greek stage, plays without words have stood high in favour with the theatre-haunting public. Pierrot himself, over whose extravagances and misfortunes we have been called upon frequently of late to laugh or weep, has long been associated with the drama of pantomime, and, in the person of Debureau, raised the Théâtre des Funambules into the position of a home of high art. There is, of course, the closest association between a piece such as *La Vie de Pierrot*, at present seen at the Prince of Wales's, pantomime and ballet. All are, or should be, plays without words, and all, in fact, sprang from the same form of entertainment. By simple aid of gesture and expression, actors and dancers about the beginning of the Christian era were accustomed in Rome to convey the idea of character and action.

The coarseness and indelicacy of these exhibitions were a matter of reproach, and exercised much in somewhat later days the Fathers of the Church. So great, indeed, was the licence the actors permitted themselves, that several Roman Emperors, not ordinarily over squeamish on points of morality, banished them from Rome, and even from Italy. The names of some of these actors, by whom the Roman public was passioned, have been preserved. Bathyllus, a freedman and favourite of Mæcenæ; Pylades, at one time banished by Augustus, but, to the great delight of the Romans, permitted to return; and Hylas, the pupil of Pylades, founded schools of pantomimic acting, and established among their respective admirers factions which often led to riot and bloodshed. Bathyllus excelled in giving tragic, and Pylades comic, significance to their play of limb and feature, and tragedies, comedies, and satires, the last very licentiously epigrammatic, were constantly presented by them.

After the ostracism of theatrical entertainments which followed the Christianisation of Rome, it was still, as is but natural, in Italy that pantomime lifted again its head, enriching theatrical art with the various types, eccentric, graceful, coarse, or refined, most of which are now mere matters of archæology, while some remain and constitute the most popular, and, in a sense, most prized of stage characters. Various countries of Italy stamped upon the comic personages of pantomime their own impress, the characters in Naples being widely different from those in Florence or Venice. Very numerous were these personages, a mere list of which would occupy considerable space. The most piquant of them survive in altered and modified form. Arlecchino, in Harlequin; Pantalone (a Venetian type), in Pantaloon; Pulcinella, to some extent in Punch; Scaramuccia, in Scaramouch; Zanni, in Zany, and so forth. Others, such as Columbine, Isabella, Pierrot, &c., reached us through the French, and changed considerably in the transit. Punch, is the character of all others most popular with us, if we except clown, the traits in which, whatever his origin, are specially English. The long-enduring and vivacious loves of Harlequin and Columbine, the most exemplary and constant of all lovers, retain a large measure of interest, and illustrate in a manner characteristically Italian some lessons which the public does not often read in them.

That the performances of these characters in Italy were always in the strict sense pantomimic may not be said. These developed into the *Commedia delle Arte*, in which, the personages being conventional, and the mere outline of plot being

assigned them, the actors themselves supplied dialogue appropriate under the conditions to the characters they took and the action in which they were supposed to participate.

Brought into France by Catherine de Medicis, Italian comedians experienced many hostile demonstrations and much royal and aristocratic patronage, and were again and again compelled to cross the Alps, but at length took root, and were established as the Comédie-Italienne, sharing at one time with Molière the Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon. Their varying fortunes concern the English stage so far only as this, that it is through France we derived our English pantomime and harlequinade, and it is from France also we get the Pierrot whose appearance in *La Vie de Pierrot* has furnished occasion for these remarks.

John Rich is credited with the introduction of pantomime in England. According to Davies's "Life of Garrick"—"By the help of gay scenes, fine habits, grand dances, appropriate music, and other decorations, he exhibited a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or some other fabulous writer. Between the pauses or acts of these serious representations he interwove a comic fable, consisting chiefly of the courtship of Harlequin and Columbine, with a variety of surprising adventures and tricks which were produced by the magic wand of Harlequin, such as the sudden transformation of palaces and temples to huts and cottages, of men and women into wheelbarrows and close-stools."

Such as it then was pantomime remained until recent times, and indeed to a certain extent now is. Spoken words, a degradation of pantomime, were soon introduced by Clown and Pantaloon when doubtful of their power by unaided gesture and grimace to hold the public. Harlequin and Columbine remain faithful to old traditions, no word ever passing between them. For her sake, to save her from the mischief of the world or the persecution of old age, and to enjoy uninterruptedly her society, he executes his marvels. She remains ever faithful, and the two realise in a sense the picture drawn by Keats:—

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss ;
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

In 1717, Rich produced his first pantomime, and he continued them up until 1760, the year before his death. In them he himself, under the name of Lun, took the part of Harlequin. Beneath a scenic print, by Vandergucht, are the lines:—

Shakspeare, Rowe, Johnson, now are quite undone ;
These are thy triumphs, thy exploits, O Lun !

Davies, who saw Rich often, says, that Garrick's action was

not more perfectly adapted to his characters than were Rich's attitudes and movements to Harlequin. His representation of Harlequin hatched from an egg by the heat of the sun was a masterpiece of dumb show, "from the first chipping of the egg, his receiving of motion, his feeling of the ground, his standing upright, to his quick harlequin trip round the empty shell . . . every limb had its tongue and every motion its voice." Garrick himself praised Rich, saying :—

When Lun appeared, with matchless art and whim,
He gave the power of speech to every limb ;
Tho' mask'd and mute, convey'd his quick intent,
And told in frolic gesture what he meant ;
But now the motley coat and sword of wood
Require a tongue to make them understood.

Rich was, however, an ignorant man with many affectations. He pretended to forget names, and called Tate Wilkinson Williamskin, Whittington, or anything else that came into his head. Foote once grew angry, and asked why he did not call him by his name. "I sometimes forget my own name," answered the famous Harlequin. "That's extraordinary," sneered Foote, "for though I know you could not write it, I did not suppose you could forget it." John Thurmond, an Irishman, was also a famous Harlequin. He wrote very many pantomimes for Rich, and played Scaramouch with him at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

In France, Harlequin and Columbine were during the last century the most popular of characters in pantomime, and innumerable plays concerning them were written by Lesage and others, in what was known as the *Théâtre de la Foire*. Pierrot gradually came, however, into highest fashion and has now, thanks in part to the beautiful sketches of M. Willette, obtained a practical monopoly of dumb show. Springing originally from Italy, he has acquired in France his most characteristic and poetical touches. His costume is derived to a great extent from the Neapolitan *Pulcinella*. Many actors since 1717, when Dominique established the character in favour, have made a reputation in the part. Debureau, an artist of brilliant talent, a Bohemian by birth and habit, whose biography Jules Janin did not scorn to write, re-created the part and gave it a new lease of life at the *Théâtre Funambules*, whence it was transferred to the *Théâtre Déjazet*. Through his mask of flour Debureau impressed deeply the public, making them laugh or cry at his bidding. Childish, stupid, mischievous, greedy, revengful, malicious, with servile tricks and vices, and familiar with the taste of the stick, Pierrot yet remained helpless, interesting, pathetic. Charles Nodier, Jal, and Théophile Gautier sounded his praises. Gautier

wrote a delightful piece, entitled *Pierrot Posthume*, in which, persuaded by others that he is dead, Pierrot bewails himself.

“ Je m'explique à présent pourquoi j'ai le teint blême
Pauvre Pierrot, allons, conduire ton deuil toi-même
Mets un crêpe à ton bras, arrose toi de pleurs,
Prononce le discours, et jette toi des fleurs,” &c.

Paul Legrand, well known in London at the St. James's and elsewhere, succeeded to some of the honours of Debureau. Since then, the rôle of Pierrot, taken by actresses like the elegant and graceful lady now at the Prince of Wales's, has been further sentimentalised. To show the connection of Pierrot with the valets of comedy and the other figures of pantomime would take us too far afield.

“ORGANISED DISTURBANCE” CRITICISED.

BY ARTHUR WILLIAM à BECKETT.

THERE has recently been much talk about disturbances in theatres on the first night of a new piece. The columns of the journals on the eve of the opening of Parliament are more free to the airing of complaints than at a later date, and playgoers, old and young, have taken advantage of the auspicious occasion. Besides the “usual sources of information,” the organisation for debate of a well-known dramatic club has been called into requisition, and consequently the subject has received ample attention. Anyone who has had the advantage—sometimes rather a doubtful privilege—of producing an original comedy or drama must perforce be opposed to a disturbance on a première. Only an author knows the wear and tear and anxiety attending such a performance. And in this term may be included everyone directly and even indirectly connected with the venture. The playwright, however popular he may be, feels that if a piece is unsuccessful, it means, so to speak, a nail in the coffin of his reputation. That nail may be withdrawn by the appearance of a later triumph, but for the moment the writer is an unfortunate man. Then the company engaged for the run of the novelty know that the chances are that “their occupation is gone” until something suitable to their respective “lines” is unearthed and got into rehearsal. Then the manager, who may have spent large sums in the mounting of the *fiasco*, looks with melancholy eyes on the diminished balance revealed by his bank pass-book. If the manager is supported by “backers,” then the syndicate or other financial power is equally melancholy. Until the fall of the final curtain everyone concerned

has been hopeful. The play has been read, accepted, and prepared. Probably it has pleased everyone during these processes; so when the pit and gallery join hands, or rather voices, to condemn, it is not strange that those behind the curtain should rush to the conclusion that there is a cabal in the auditorium. The author is quite convinced that his latest work is his finest, the manager does not consider his wisdom in selection at fault, and the actors and actresses are quite sure that they have done their level best. As these witnesses are experts, they cannot understand that the hostile reception awarded to their combined efforts is honest criticism. It must be some miserable back-stair influence that has provoked the hissing of the gods and the cruel laughter of the groundlings.

There have been ringleaders actuated by the basest motives, and the British public have followed like a flock of sheep the sinister example of these unprincipled wreckers of the national drama. All this is very natural, but on that account it is not the more probable. Of course a cabal is possible, but nine cases out of ten—or I might even say ninety-nine times out of a hundred—the true cause of a play's failure is its inherent weakness. A really experienced manager can tell at a glance whether a *fiasco* is the fault of the author or the crime of the audience. On a few occasions the verdict at a first performance has been reversed when the lessee has shown faith in the piece, and has valued the opposition of the "first nighters" at a real estimate. Such was the case when Mr. Labouchere produced *The Turn of the Tide* at the Queen's Theatre, in Long-acre, about a quarter of a century ago. The play was a stage version of *The Morals of Mayfair*, by Mr. F. C. Burnand, who at that time was gradually extending his reputation as a burlesque writer, by adapting from the French, and turning English novels into London pieces. He had written *The Deal Boatman*, founded upon the "Little Em'ly" incident in *David Copperfield*, and had turned his attention to the theatrical possibilities of some of the capital romances of Mrs. Edwardes. For some reason or other, on the first night, *The Turn of the Tide*, in spite of wonderful effects and excellent acting, was a failure. It was condemned both by press and public. But Mr. Labouchere believed in the play, and retained it in the bills in spite of scanty audiences for three weeks. Then the turn of the financial tide arrived, and the drama kept the boards for many hundred nights. Another instance of the same kind was *Monte Cristo*, produced at the Adelphi, the theatre where Charles Fechter was appearing in his farewell engagement. The *première* was nothing less than a *fiasco*. The piece was "guyed"

from beginning to end, and the "notices" were simply terrible. But the management refused to be discouraged. Fechter declared in favour of the play, and it consequently continued to be performed. A fortnight or three weeks of bad business followed, and then the drama turned the corner, and became a very fair success. To the best of my recollection the piece was played to paying audiences for a couple of hundred nights. But the instances to which I have referred are exceptions to a general rule. As a matter of fact, the verdict of the first audience usually decides the fortune of the play.

And now as to "organised opposition." I humbly confess I do not believe in it. The *claque* is not understood in England. Foreign actors sometimes complain that they have been disconcerted by the absence of paid applause in London theatres. They have been accustomed, so they say, to receiving a "round" for certain points, and when that round is conspicuous by its absence they feel that they have missed a cue. But a *claque* would not be tolerated in England. Sometimes when a young man of gentle birth takes to the stage his comrades of the clubs determine to give him a good send off. On such an occasion the stalls and boxes are filled with gentlemen of the "Johnnie" class. They are not judicious, and applaud unwisely and too well. The new comer appears on the stage (cheers); he sits down on a chair (further applause); he opens his mouth to make some common-place remark (immense enthusiasm). This sort of thing soon irritates the pit and gallery, with lamentable results to the management. I remember seeing at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre a play called *Tame Cats* wrecked by something of this sort. It was not a particularly clever piece, but I fancy would have weathered the storm had it not been for the indiscriminate applause bestowed upon a young actor by a number of his too enthusiastic supporters. On a first night the *claque*, if present, is more in evidence than on other occasions, on account of the audience being composed to a large extent of deadheads. Not only does the press monopolise scores of seats—for the provinces as well as London have nowadays to be considered—but the friends of the management expect to be invited. And if those friends are ignored they do as much harm in the salon and the club smoking-room as the forgotten critic in the "theatrical chat" of his newspaper. So an acting manager who knows his business is careful to fill the auditorium with influential dead-heads, both professional and amateur. And there is no more unsympathetic sightseer than he who comes in with an order. The acknowledged censor of the press rarely applauds—it is not

the etiquette of the profession. And what the critics do, or neglect to do, becomes the object lesson of the remainder of the non-paying assembly. Consequently, when a vast majority of the audience are silent, the cheers of a *claque* are peculiarly conspicuous. But although critics and friends of the management may be apathetic about applauding themselves, they have sufficient loyalty to the author and the players to resent anything approaching to malicious condemnation. Years ago the theatres on a first night used to be visited by a number of facetious persons. These took up their places in the first row of the pit and a conspicuous part of the gallery. I must confess that these persons used to amuse me immensely, although I utterly condemned their conduct. For the sake of airing their claims to being considered wits, they would catch up some unfortunate expression on the stage and turn it to comic account. For instance, if someone said "This is dreadful," the immediate and obvious reply from the auditorium was "Indeed it is." If the heroine, in dire distress, cried "I wish I had never been born," the reply would promptly come, "And so do we," and so on, and so on. But even when the wags of the pit were present they did not dare to indulge in their cruel chaff until the fortunes of the play had taken a turn for the worse. Still, I have seen a piece utterly condemned that might have scraped through had but the author used his blue pencil wisely before the rising of the curtain. A playwright should carefully cut out any sentence or expression capable of bearing a double interpretation or receiving an embarrassing retort. Never let anyone say he or she won't be long, or the chances are that the wag in the gallery will shout out "Thank you." Any uncomplimentary expression of opinion by an actor on the stage, as I have already pointed out, is dangerous, because the condemnation may be applied to the piece itself; and the author, always careful, should be particularly discreet about his last act. It is in the final half-hour that the gying wag has his best chance. The piece may have been rather long and a little tedious, and the weary audience are agog for entertainment, even if it be a wee bit malicious. It is then that they laugh, instead of groaning, at the retort unconscious. But then the band of wags will not be considered an organised opposition in the sense accepted by the aggrieved managers who have recently complained to the newspapers. No; the small jokes of the pit and gallery were comic matter in the wrong place—chaff at a *première*.

A word in conclusion. I have attended the theatre for the last thirty years, generally as a professional critic, sometimes as "a friend of the management," and always as an expert. More-

over, I am a dramatic author who, from time to time, has been a pretty frequent contributor to the stage of the west-end theatres, so my sympathies are entirely with those who exist behind the footlights. And, acknowledging this influence, I am bound to say that I have never come across any case of organised opposition. I have seen the theatre absolutely packed from stalls to gallery with holders of free admissions—but as partisans of the management, not as opponents. So I confess that I think managers with a grievance upon this point are unduly sensitive. I do not for a moment believe that they do not fancy they have cause for complaint. No doubt they are absolutely sincere in their cry for redress. And if they cannot be convinced to the contrary, let them pluck up heart and determine to live the opposition down. With a spirited management in command, unjust criticism has never been allowed to kill a play. If a piece is really good, the fact will soon be published in places where people most do congregate. It will be bruited about in the *salle à manger*, in the hall of the club, at the Law Courts. The public will soon extend its patronage. Then, when the play is once in full swing, a judicious invitation to the press may reverse a hostile verdict. The critics in their “second notices” may generously declare they may have been wrong; and thus harmony and prosperity may be obtained without appealing to the majesty of the law as represented in the person of a truncheoned policeman.

THEATRICAL L. S. D. AND THE IMPORTED DRAMA.

BY JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

WHEN the Comédie Française was induced to come to London in its entirety in 1879, the enterprise was entered into on both sides as a purely commercial transaction. On the French side it was an assured certainty; on my side it was a speculation regarded by many theatrical experts as extremely hazardous. I entered into it cheerfully, as the risk rested entirely on my individual shoulders. I represented no “syndicate,” and never had a “backer.” If there had been a loss (I knew what loss was probable) I was prepared to pay it. There was no loss—quite the contrary. The six weeks’ season yielded a nett profit of £7,000.

The detailed figures of that season have never been published, and as matter for the theatrical historian they are worthy of a place in a professional magazine like *The Theatre*. The managers of the Théâtre Français had no power to call for these figures, as

the company came over at a contract price. M. Emile Perrin, the Director-General, had an opportunity of "sharing," which he declined. He was left to name his price. He fixed what he called the average *maximum* of the theatre (£240 a night) and £160 for the Saturday's *matinée*—making £1,600 a week—always payable in advance. The terms were agreed to; £1,600 was immediately paid as a deposit, and a similar amount was paid every Monday morning during the performances before mid-day.

The company comprised the following *sociétaires*:—

MM.				Date of Election.
E. Got	...	...	...	1850
Delaunay	...	...	...	1850
Maubant	...	...	...	1852
Coquelin aîné	...	...	...	1864
Febvre	...	...	...	1867
Thiron	...	...	...	1872
Mounet-Sully	...	...	...	1874
La Roche	...	...	...	1875
Barré	...	...	...	1876
Worms	...	...	...	1877
Coquelin cadet	...	...	...	1878
Mmes.				
Madeleine Brohan	...	...	...	1852
Favart	...	...	...	1854
Jouassain	...	...	...	1863
Riquer	...	...	...	1864
Ponsin	...	...	...	1866
Dinah Félix	...	...	...	1871
Reichemberg	...	...	...	1872
Croizette	...	...	...	1875
Sarah Bernhardt	...	...	...	1876
Blanche Barretta	...	...	...	1876
Emilie Broisat	...	...	...	1876
Jeanne Samary	...	...	...	1878

The pensionnaires included MM. Garraud, Prudhon, Boucher, Martel, Joliet, Dupont-Vernon, Roger, Sylvain, Volny, Reney, Richard, Truffier, Masquillier, Baillet Tronchet, Villain, and Davriguy; Mmes. Pauline Granger, Lloyd, Martin, Bianca, A. Médecin Dudley, Agar, Thénard, Fayolle, and Frémaux.

The traditions of the Théâtre Français are to make no actor or actress a "star," and these traditions were rigidly adhered to by the managers of the company, but were not accepted by the British public. Weeks before the company arrived, public curiosity had been fixed upon Sarah Bernhardt, and before the curtain rose on the first night that public had made that actress a star—and a star of the first magnitude. This was shown by the variations in the receipts on the nights when Sarah Bernhardt was out of the bill, the performances being so arranged that the company could give the pick of its repertory. In sub-

mitting to this I acted as a bad tradesman, and suffered a pecuniary loss in consequence.

DETAILED LIST OF REPRESENTATIONS.

1879			£	s.	d.
Monday, June 2		Prologue, "Misanthrope;" 2nd Act, "Phèdre,"			
		"Les Précieuses Ridicules"	* 523	3	0
Tuesday	3	"L'Etrangère"	* 502	10	0
Wednesd'y	4	"Le Fils Naturel"	371	18	6
Thursday	5	"Les Caprices de Marianne," "La Joie Fait Peur"	404	7	6
Friday	6	"Le Menteur," "Le Médecin Malgré Lui"	381	10	6
Saturday	7	"Le Marquis de Villemer"	398	7	6
Morning	7	"Tartuffe. La Joie Fait Peur"	349	3	0
		1st Week, £2,931.			
Monday	9	"Hernani"	* 543	10	0
Tuesday	10	"Le Demi-Monde"	457	1	6
Wednesd'y	11	"Mdle. de Belle-Isle," "Il Faut qu'une Porte soit Ouverte ou Fermée"	416	13	6
Thursday	12	"Postscriptum," "Le Gendre de M. Poirier"	417	11	6
Friday	13	"Phèdre"	* 556	15	6
Saturday	14	"Luthier de Crémone," "Le Sphinx"	533	11	6
Morning	14	"Misanthrope. Les Plaideurs"	353	6	0
		2nd Week, £3,278 9s. 6d.			
Monday	16	"L'Ami Fritz"	374	13	0
Tuesday	17	"Zaire," "Les Précieuses Ridicules"	* 522	19	6
Wednesd'y	18	"Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hazard," "Il ne Faut Jurer de Rien"	441	7	6
Thursday	19	"Le Demi-Monde"	486	4	6
Friday	20	"Les Fourchambault"	447	6	6
Saturday	21	"Hernani"	* 534	9	0
Morning	21	"Tartuffe," "Il faut qu'une Porte," &c.	84	11	0
		3rd Week, £2,891 11s.			
Monday	23	"Gringoire. On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour"	443	3	0
Tuesday	24	"Chez l'Avocat," "Mdle. La Seiglière"	386	14	6
Wednesd'y					
Morning	25	"L'Etrangère"	* 468	7	6
Wednesd'y	25	"Le Barbier de Séville"	367	4	0
Thursday	26	"Andromaque. Les Plaideurs"	* 533	5	6
Friday	27	"L'Avare," "L'Etincelle"	471	0	6
Saturday	28	"Le Sphinx," "Le Dépit Amoureux"	* 514	6	0
Morning	28	"Hernani"	* 549	3	0
		4th Week, £3,733 4s. 0d.			
Monday	30	"Ruy Blas"	* 546	14	6
Tuesday, July 1		"Mercadet," "L'Eté de St. Martin"	394	2	6
Wednesd'y	2	"Ruy Blas"	* 526	10	6
Thursday	3	"Le Mariage de Victorine," "Les Fourberies de Scapin"	406	13	6
Friday	4	"Les Femmes Savantes," "L'Etincelle"	478	14	0
Saturday	5	"Les Fourchambault"	427	13	6
Morning	5	"Phèdre," "La Joie Fait Peur"	* 570	10	6
		5th Week, £3,350 19s. 0d.			
Monday	7	"Le Marquis de Villemer"	422	15	6
Tuesday	8	"L'Ami Fritz"	440	4	0
Wednesd'y	9	"Hernani"	* 571	0	0

Thursday July 10	"Le Sphinx"	*551 0 0
Friday „ 11	"Philiberte," "L'Etourdi"	459 18 6
Saturday „ 12	"Ruy Blas"	*506 18 0
Morning „ 12	"Gringoire" (5th Act), "Hernani," "La Bénédiction" (recitation) "Davenant," "L'Etincelle"	*549 0 0
6th Week, £3,500 16s. 0d.		

Total, £19,685 19s. 6d. (an average of £468 10s. a performance).

These figures, if dissected, will show that out of the forty-three performances (including seven matinées), the eighteen in which Sarah Bernhardt played produced an average of £534 for each performance; while the twenty-five representations in which she did not appear, produced an average of £400 for each performance. My expenses always remained the same—about £350 per night. The very small receipts (£84 11s.) at the matinée of June 21st arose from the fact that Sarah Bernhardt was slightly ill and could not play her part in the piece announced—*L'Etrangère*. The audience were given their choice of having their money back, tickets for another performance, or remaining to see *Tartuffe* and the little piece, *Il faut qu'une Porte*, &c. The figures recorded show how few remained, even to see Molière's masterpiece represented to perfection, while those who went away, claiming their money or fresh tickets, must have represented more than £400. The extra matinée (June 25) was given to atone for June 21. The prices, I should state, were always double the ordinary theatrical prices, and even then the one guinea stall, on "Sarah" nights or mornings, was often sold in the "open market," by subscribers, at five guineas.

These facts and figures taught Madame Bernhardt her commercial value, and made Coquelin, and even Got, restless and discontented. Before the close of the brief season Sarah Bernhardt offered to come back the following year, and bring with her a carefully selected company. On being asked her personal terms, she replied "£80 a performance for herself—or £560 a week—playing six nights and one matinée." I agreed to this, and had no cause to regret my decision. She came in 1880, opening May 24, and gave 28 representations in four weeks. The receipts were £9,471 9s.—or an average of £340 a representation. She finished on the 19th of June, and the Palais Royal company, in its entirety, including Madame Chaumont (an actress, as M. Perrin admitted, who ought to have been at the Français), gave 28 representations, spread over four weeks, ending July 17th—the receipts being £6,364 12s. I indulged in French plays almost as soon as I opened the Gaiety (December 21, 1868), and I continued them, year after year, in

the height of the summer, as at that time I found my ordinary entertainments were seriously affected by the hot season. Very early in my career as a theatrical manager I determined to import the entire Comédie Française at any cost, but I failed during the lifetime of M. Thiers, although my friend Sir Campbell Clarke did his best. The negotiations afterwards were carried on by Mr. M. L. Mayer, and I am indebted to his tact, perseverance, and knowledge of his people and subject for their successful issue.

THE AUTHOR OF *THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS*.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

THE appearance of a new edition of *Their Majesties' Servants* may have reminded not a few of our readers of a singularly attractive personality. Dr. Doran, the author of the book, was an Irish gentleman of the best type—scholarly, courteous, quietly humorous, keen-sighted, warm-hearted, and altogether free from unworthy jealousies. In no way did his warmth of heart more clearly show itself than in the encouragement and help he extended to young writers. Let me narrate my own experiences on this head, though by doing so I may expose myself to a charge of egotism. In 1867, at the mature age of eighteen, I had the temerity, as a result of reading *Their Majesties' Servants*, to prepare a biography of Edmund Kean. Bearing a letter of introduction to Doran from Oxenford, with whom he had but a slight acquaintance, I called upon him at his house, 33, Lansdowne-road, Notting-hill. In the absence of Hepworth Dixon, he was then editing, as well as contributing copiously to, the *Athenæum*. Nevertheless, he left his work to see me, entered sympathetically into my project, gave me a good deal of sound advice, and talked for more than an hour of the bygone glories of the English stage. When the MS. went to the printers, I asked him to look at two or three of the proofs. "Send them all," was his characteristic reply. Of course I did so, and I have no reason to doubt that he read them with the utmost care. Above all, he led off a number of the then all-powerful *Athenæum* with a two-page review of the book, not failing to point out its glaring defects, especially in its style, but bidding it a welcome quite sufficient to account for the commercial success it achieved. Nor did this kindly interest in me diminish as time passed on. One afternoon we happened to leave the British Museum together.

"Any new work on hand?" he cheerily asked. "Yes," I answered, "a history of the old French stage." "Where are you now?" "At the end of the Louis XV. period." "What have you been reading this afternoon?" "Grimm's correspondence." "I see," he said, "that you are on the right track. I know the literature of that age rather well. If I can be of any assistance to you, be sure to tell me." He often made such offers to beginners, and was always as good as his word. "I am determined," he would say, "to prolong my youth as far as possible by persisting in hopefulness, by drawing young life about me." For myself, I can never speak of him except in terms of affectionate gratitude.

As the author of *Their Majesties' Servants*, the most popular history of the English stage, John Doran has a special claim to attention in the pages of *The Theatre*. He came of an old Drogheda family—so old, indeed, that it was formerly one of the great Irish septs—and was born in London in 1807. He received his education at private schools, his father, who was in business, helping to ground him in Greek, Latin, and French. In early life he was frequently at the playhouse; he could just remember Mrs. Siddons, and had a vivid recollection of John Philip Kemble. A passion for the drama soon took possession of his mind, as may be gathered from the fact that in his sixteenth year a version by him of *The Wandering Jew* was produced at the Surrey Theatre. Then, as tutor to Lord Glenlyon's son, the sixth Duke of Athole that was to be, he passed two or three years in Germany and France, acquiring a wide knowledge of the literature of each country. One of the events he witnessed was the coronation of Charles X. at Rheims. He next became tutor in the family of Mr. Henry Lascelles, afterwards Lord Harewood. In the meantime he had used his pen to good purpose, chiefly in the production of light sketches. Marrying, he settled in London, devoted himself to periodical literature, and presently established that connection with the *Athenæum* which lasted until the end of his days. But his work as a reviewer, though combined again and again with that of editing the paper during Hepworth Dixon's numerous holidays abroad, did not prevent him, so great was his industry, from writing those entertaining and instructive books which gave him a place of his own in contemporary literature. Among these were *Table Traits*, *A History of Court Fools*, *Lives of the Queens of the House of Hanover*, *Monarchs Retired from Business*, *Lives of the Princes of Wales*, *Knights and Their Days*, *Their Majesties' Servants*, and *London in the Jacobite Times*. He also sent much to the magazines, edited the last journals of Horace Walpole, and had a share in putting the Kimbolton

papers into shape for publication. He even found time on Saturdays to join the merry throng about the "old tree" of Our Club at Clunn's Hotel in Covent-garden, there to meet Thackeray, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Henry Hawkins, E. M. Ward, James Hannay, George Jessel, Julius Benedict, Norman Lockyer, Charles Knight, Robert Chambers, Horace Mayhew, James W. Davison, and many other shining lights. Active to the last, he died rather suddenly at the beginning of 1878, his final article being one for the *Nineteenth Century* on "Shakspeare in France." The keynote of his criticism, I would add, was justice tempered with kindness. "You are not mistaken," he once said to a young reviewer, "as to your facts. But don't hurt people needlessly with that strong pen of yours. When you come to be as old as I am"—he was then about sixty-five—"you will be sorry to remember that you have been guilty of unnecessary harshness to anyone."

Their Majesties' Servants, originally brought out in 1863, may be deemed almost a classic of its kind. It deals, as a second title informs us, with the "Annals of the English Stage from Thomas Betterton to Edmund Kean." Advanced students of theatrical history may reasonably complain that Doran did not aim at a more comprehensive treatment of his subject. He is at no pains to criticise groups of plays, to indicate the features of distinctive schools of acting, or to look at the drama by the light of the age through which it was passing. Philosophical history was not at all to his taste, though he could detect the currents of the past as readily as most men. However, it may be scarcely fair to try him by a standard which he never attempted to reach. In *Their Majesties' Servants*, as was his wont, he contented himself with giving us a work of the purely anecdotal order—one of those agreeable and sometimes learned works, it has been remarked, which, rated at their lowest, "may be commended for affording just the intellectual diversion that is most acceptable to men of cultivated taste and scholarly attainments in their hours of idleness." And within this comparatively limited sphere he set all competition at defiance. He wrote with a well-nigh exhaustive knowledge; he loved the atmosphere of the theatre; he told his stories with sly but infectious humour; he had a quick perception of all that is striking in character, incident, and situation. Now and then, without any sort of pretence, he rose to something like eloquence, as in his description of Edmund Kean's delivery of the speech in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, "Yes, as rocks are." Some of his sketches might be deemed not unworthy of Charles Lamb himself. Altogether,

this work, in spite of its restricted aim and scope, is entitled to the reputation it has in the literature of the stage. The author, speaking of Colley Cibber, says that "it were well if all gentlemen who may hereafter aspire to exercise the critical art were compelled to study his *Apology*, as medical students are to become acquainted with their Celsus." No less applicable are those words to *Their Majesties' Servants*, the liveliest and most graphic of stage histories yet penned.

MISS EMILY SOLDENE'S RECOLLECTIONS.

BY ARTHUR ESCOTT.

IN compliance with what many of us may deem a too-prevalent custom, Miss Emily Soldene, after a partial silence of some years, reappears before us as the author of an autobiography, just brought out by Messrs. Downey and Co. Her right to claim attention for a work of the kind is hardly to be questioned. No old playgoer who takes up this collection of *Theatrical and Musical Recollections* will be in a hurry to put it down. Beginning as a concert singer in 1864, Miss Soldene soon became famous at two of the principal music halls of London, and was associated in no slight degree with the introduction of opéra-bouffe of the latter-day French pattern into this country. More especially did she contribute to the success of *Chilpéric*, *Le Petit Faust*, and, above all, *Geneviève de Brabant*, which may be said to have drawn all London to the Philharmonic Theatre at Islington. In course of time she undertook several tours abroad, meeting everywhere with the cordiality due to good singing, expressive acting, and excellence of taste. As to her present work, it may not always be accurate and in the best of style, but is certainly one which no historian of the stage during the latter half of the nineteenth century can afford to pass over.

Of two players in *Chilpéric*, produced at the Lyceum, Miss Soldene has much to say. "There was Dolaro, Selina Dolaro, as the Spanish princess, with her dark Moorish face, her truly wonderful eyes, her ivory-coloured skin and red lips, carrying a flower in her mouth years before Bizet's *Carmen* was created, or even thought of. What an inimitable, and Spanish, and coquettish, and altogether 'too too, don't you know' shake she would give to her petticoats, as she tripped down the stage! What a blaze of colour, red and yellow, and black satin, and gold spangles, and a high brass comb—such a comb was never seen before—with spangled mantilla, a red rose in her hair, and all

over her little knots and fluttering bows of ribbon, and little metal tips and tabs that tinkled again, and black silk spangled stockings, and tiny shoes embroidered with gold, and a tam-bourine with long and sweeping ribbons—all the colours of the rainbow—and little bobs of colour at the edges of her skirts! On she would come, wearing all these things, and a mixed expression which was supposed to be at once Spanish and demure, and you believed in it until, she lazily lifting her white heavy eyelids, you were, suddenly and certainly and completely, convinced that ‘demure’ used in association with her was not the appropriate expression. The Selina Dolaro of those times was not the fashionable ‘Dolly’ that was subsequently evolved. In the days I am speaking of, she would, after the performance, make haste and get dressed (she invariably wore black), and wait on the stage in the semi-darkness for her father, Mr. Simmons, who was one of the first violins. He always came up quickly, and, catching hold of her, out they would go—out into the night—so attached, they seemed all in all to each other, the father with his daughter in one hand and his fiddle-case in the other. There was another member of the cast who absolutely divided the palm of loveliness with the ladies. This was a masculine ‘masher,’ Marius, then young and beautiful, and slender, and sleek, and sly, and so elegant. An ideal Cherubino, but, I am afraid, even more susceptible than that operatically historical and love-stricken young person. He played Landry, and made love to Frédégonde or Bruneant, he didn’t care which, with an ardour that was not only particularly French, but particularly pleasing, and particularly successful—so successful, indeed, that every girl in the front of the house was seized with a wild desire to under-study those two erratic, not to say imprudent, characters. He certainly looked awfully nice, his figure being perfection. And how clever he was! and how he managed what he was pleased to call ‘his voice!’ It was not singing, but ‘he got there all the same.’ He had a solo in the second act, and at the finish there was a top A. To see with what grace and energy he worked up to the climax, and then, at the supreme moment, rushed to the front, opened his mouth (such a pretty one, with a tiny, soft dark line, masquerading as a moustache) as wide as possible, lifted his right arm to Heaven, looked the gallery full in the face, and sang straight from the chest—what?—nothing—not a sound; and the orchestra sustained him with a big, long, tremolando chord; and the public always encored him with acclamation, and he—he always did it again.”

Except Miss Soldene, no one concerned in the production of *Geneviève de Brabant* foresaw the success of the piece. Mr. Charles

Morton, the manager, was in his gloomiest mood; Mr. Farnie, the adapter, abandoned the rehearsals in disgust for his beloved Paris. Yet, as Miss Soldene remarks, the result of the first performance itself was a "record breaker." "The enthusiasm, the applause, the crowded house! The piece went with a snap and 'vim.' Everybody recollected every word and made every point. The gaiety of the audience was infectious. Every line, every topical allusion was given with dash and received with shouts of laughter. How the Burgo-master blew his nose like a trumpet, 'toot-ti-ti-toot-ti-ti-too,' and never got any further with his speech than 'In the year one.' How the gendarmes sang their 'We'll run 'em in' seventeen times. How everybody worked for the general good. (It is impossible to overpraise their loyalty.) How Mr. Morton came on the stage and 'took it all back,' and congratulated and thanked and treated everybody. How a certain gentleman, named Clement Scott, sat in the front and was good to us, and wrote a half-column notice, which, appearing next morning in the *Observer*, made a certain singer famous as Droган, and grateful for ever."

CHARITY AND THE DRAMA.

BY F. H. MADDEN.

IN connection with this title two questions arise, to which, however, two very different answers must be given. What has the Drama done for Charity? is the first; and the answer can only be, "more than is dreamt of." What has Charity done for the Drama? In this case the answer must be, practically, *nil*. The wide difference between the two questions may not perhaps appear on the surface to the uninitiated, but a consideration of the matter under two heads may serve to throw light on what seems at first sight obscure. What has the Drama done for Charity? Bacon wrote: "*Goodnesse* answers to the Theological Vertue Charitie, and admits no Excesse but Errour. The desire of Power in Excesse caused the Angels to fall; the desire of Knowledge in Excesse caused Man to fall; but in *Charity* there is no Excesse; neither can Angell or Man come in danger by it. The inclination to *Goodnesse* is imprinted deeply in the Nature of Man." I venture to assert that this inclination is imprinted in no other race of men and women more deeply than in the subjects of the Stage. No matter at what cost and inconvenience to themselves, actors and actresses, and lessees and managers, for the spirit seems catching in this particular branch of life, will

give their services, their talents, and their theatres absolutely gratuitously in aid of any really deserving Charity. Many a hospital has reason to bless the *goodnesse* of the dramatic profession, and many a church likewise. It is not only in connection with public institutions and public ceremonies alone that this *goodnesse* is found, but, as is well known, in private life a helping hand and the untying of purse strings is never denied to an unfortunate or struggling fellow artist. Volumes might be filled with tales of self-sacrifice and love shown, surpassing human knowledge, were it not that, though advertisement may be a *sine quâ non* in their business relations with the world, in their private charities they may truly be said to hide their light under a bushel.

La Fontaine wrote :

“ Il est bon d'être charitable ;
Mais envers qui ? C'est-là la point.”

The members of the dramatic profession do not stay to make inquiries, and let the afflicted perish ere help be forthcoming. They give with open hand and open heart, and leave to Providence the justice of the case. It were well if some so-called charitable societies took a lesson therefrom. “ He gives twice who gives quickly ” is their motto. The *goodnesse* of Sir Henry Irving is too well known to need recapitulation in a dramatic paper, but, as he is at the head of a profession which he adorns by his personality and talents, his example may be contagious. The rank and file of any profession is bound to be influenced by its acknowledged leaders.

What has Charity done for the Drama ? It is surprising that with such undoubted proofs of the self-abnegation of the dramatic world there should exist so few charitable institutions for its exclusive benefit, and that the great British public, who are so ready to laugh and cry with it on the stage, should be so lax in exerting themselves either with their money or their help to cheer or comfort its members, when, either through sickness or misfortune, they find themselves in temporary or permanent difficulties.

It may be said that the existence of the Actors' Benevolent Fund, the Actors' Association, the Dramatic and Musical Sick Fund, and the Ladies' Theatrical Guild, recently founded by Mrs. Carson and Mrs. Clement Scott, and composed as it is of noble and generous minded women, is doing an enormous amount of good among their poorer sisters, belie my words. Most, however, of these excellent charities are born, bred, and maintained by the members of the profession themselves, and though assisted by well wishers, do not receive any such support as might be

expected, when one considers the absolutely countless army of playgoers in existence. It certainly seems, then, the irony of fate that the followers of the histrionic art, who are so ready to give, should receive such scant acknowledgment at the hands of the wealthy classes. It is the more strange because actors and actresses, whose whole life is given up to the amusement of others, might be expected, and with small blame, to throw off with their paint and powder all thoughts of any but themselves. Far from this being the case, however, the milk of human kindness seems engendered in the breasts of all, from the highest to the lowest rung of the dramatic ladder. It is well known that though large salaries are earned by the fortunate ones, expenses are unreasonably heavy, and that, moreover, there is always the danger of an indefinite amount of enforced resting for all but the most talented. There should be a Dramatic Orphan Asylum in existence. The endowment of a theatrical bed in each of the great hospitals of London should be an accomplished fact. For the carrying out of such the present moment is most auspicious. The celebration of the Queen's reign this year as the longest on record forms a fitting time, when, amid the thousand and one schemes which will be carried out to mark the unprecedented fact, the claims of the purveyors of the universal amusement should not be lost sight of—the more so as the members of the royal family are all staunch supporters of the stage. The levy of a small tax on every playgoer all over the kingdom for the space of one week would probably bring in sufficient to accomplish some charitable memorial, which might combine with its object of marking an important epoch in the Victorian Era, a proof of the gratitude of all English men and women to their friends behind the scenes—those friends of whom the poet wrote:

“But by the mighty actor brought
Illusion's perfect triumphs come ;
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And sculpture to be dumb.”

A GRAVE MISTAKE.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

“**H**I! Roff! Come in here and have a glass of cham.”
Some men carry their profession blazoned outside, as plain to read as if it were writ largely in letters, and it was so here. The speaker, a well-built, handsome young fellow of four or five and twenty, straddled stiffly about the pavement, as if he had a

charger between his legs, carried his chest well forward, and while his left hand supported his cane as if it were a sheathed sabre, his right rearranged the twist of his heavy moustache.

As for the stoutish elderly man he addressed, it needed not the fact that he was blinking through coming out of the stage door of The Cibber, from gloomy gas-made-visible regions by the stage, into the glare of a sunny day, for the dress, the way of wearing the hat, the walk as of one who goes R. or L. in the face of an audience, and, above all, that closely-shaven face so suggestive of thousands of makes-up, told of "general utility," without the way in which he stopped, raised and lowered his heavy eyebrows, and replied with a thump of the cane *à la* Sir Anthony Absolute addressing his son:—

"Sir, they do not sell champagne here fit for a gentleman to drink."

"Then come on to the Symposium, dear old boy."

"No, sir; I have grown too old to partake of drink only fit for boys. When I take anything, sir, it is the best Scotch, hot, and last thing at night before I seek my couch. Good morning."

The eyebrows came into play again, two wrinkles formed at the corners of his lips, as if to form parentheses for his next remark, scowlingly addressed to an imaginary audience, while he thumped his gold-headed Malacca cane heavily upon the stones again. The remark was strong, and delivered emphatically from deep down in the chest in a well-studied bass. It was:

"D—n him!"

He walked southward for the bridge leading to the classic region of Lambeth, flourished his cane so that the gold head twinkled and gave glimpses of the engraved inscription, "Presented to Robert Roff, Esquire, by his fellow artists," &c., &c. And then the theatrical smile died out, but he was still ruffled.

"Curse his champagne!" he muttered, still addressing an imaginary audience. "Bribery and corruption; paltry bribery, of a kind that makes a man's gorge rise—corruption of the basest kind. Confound him and his wealth and his title! What does he take me for? Does he expect me to act as his go-between? Does he suppose that a man who walks the boards cannot be a gentleman, and that a woman who has honoured me—yes, sir, *honoured* me, an old professional, who has studied and played in the best pieces for forty years—by asking my advice again and again, cannot be a lady? Why—God bless her!" he muttered, and his whole manner changed. His face lit up, and it was the hearty, honest, natural man speaking, as there was a slight humidity in

his eyes. "A privilege—a privilege—hum! Well, I think I will. Smooth me down."

He was passing a tobacconist's, and he stopped and turned in; the man behind the counter bade him a smiling "good day," and without waiting for orders took down a box of Manillas, handed it and then a light, taking twopence-halfpenny, because there was a mutual arrangement that the customer had them nearly at the rate of five for a shilling, though he only had one at a time.

"Now," continued the smoker, as he walked on and exhaled a cloud, taking out the cheroot and turning it in his fingers—"if I had been civil to that military swell he would have brought out his case and handed me a Rothschild or a Larranaga, or some other choice brand that cost five or six pound a box, and it wouldn't have tasted half so good as my tuppenny ha'penny whiff—no, nor half so sweet. If ever I have a theatre of my own, hang me if I'll have any of that philandering about the stage door, and leaving notes and bouquets. I'll—I tell you what I'll do—no, I won't, for I shall never have a theatre, and a manager can't do quite as he likes.

"He'll be hanging about there for hours, unless someone tells him he's on a fool's errand. He expected she'd be rehearsing—a puppy—ready for to-night. But he'll be there by-and-by. Taken a box, I'll be bound, and—oh, hang the fellow! Why should I worry my brains about him? She'll fetch 'em to-night; I haven't a doubt about it. There couldn't have been a better cast. Why, I quite snivelled over that scene yesterday. If she could play with all that emotion in that cold gloomy theatre, by the light of that miserable rake of gas jets, and bring that sweet, silvery, pathetic voice of hers to bear as she did, why, she'll make 'em rise at her to-night, and, bless her! it will be the turning point in her career. I told Moss so, and he sneered a bit, but he knows it now, and he shall double her screw, or my name's not Roff."

II.

The old man was quite right. He had never shone much himself; he was too useful and too safe to be trusted with leading parts, and he had long grown too old, but his forty years on the stage had given him experience.

"I knew it," he said, rubbing his hands, in the wings. The bursts of applause succeeded one another during the progress of the clever domestic comedy; the heroine was called on at the end of the first act; twice at the end of the second; and again

and again, with the whole company, at the fall of the curtain; while, amidst a shower of bouquets, one of white lilies came from the stage box on the off prompt side, and Sir George Carlow's voice was one of the loudest in the calls.

He was waiting at the stage door for some time, and at last spoke to the doorkeeper, after slipping something in his hand, only to turn away with a curse.

For old Roff, for reasons of his own, was in waiting too, and when, flushed and excited, Bertha Deane left her dressing-room, he led her through the iron door by the side of the manager's box, and hurried her to the front, where a cab was in waiting.

"Now, don't you say a word, my dear," he whispered, as he shut her in. "You get home, go to bed, and have a good long rest. Good-night. God bless you! You've done it. A big success."

III.

They call it North Kensington now, the Gravel Pits in its early days; and here, in the front room of a modest first floor, the heroine of the past night's success, looking, if anything, more sweetly innocent and attractive than when she had set every heart throbbing with emotion the night before, sat busily writing a note.

She was quite alone. The folding doors leading into the little back drawing-room were closed; upon a stand in the window the great bouquet of lilies stood in a vase; there was another bouquet on the table, and, most conspicuous object there, lying close to the blotter upon which she wrote, was an open morocco case, upon whose blue velvet pad lay a handsome diamond bracelet.

The note was finished, and the envelope directed, after a reference to another note, half covered by the jewel-case. Then this latter was taken up, the bracelet lifted and held to the light, while a faint smile played for a moment about the holder's lip. Then the jewel was carefully replaced, the lid shut down with a sharp snap, and it was carefully done up in a sheet of paper, sealed, and directed, the word "registered" being boldly written across the top.

A firm dash was being made beneath the word, when there were steps upon the stairs, and a maid of the familiar "Apartments to Let" pattern hurried in, to exclaim excitedly—

"It's Sir George something, 'm, and he said——"

"Yes, all right," came loudly. "That will do," and the young

officer stepped cavalierly forward, closed the door upon the admiring maid's gaze, and turned, hat in hand, to the occupant of the room.

"Oh, good morning!" he cried, as in one comprehensive glance he took in the bouquet in the window—his offering—and the standing figure which had just risen from the table, looking flushed and trembling one moment, but perfectly calm the next.

"You will excuse me for calling so soon, won't you?" he said, hurriedly, as without giving time for a reply he continued, "I did wait at the stage door last night to congratulate you, but you were gone. I could not stay away; I was obliged to come. Oh, my dear Miss Deane, what a success—what a scene! Won't you shake hands? What a house!—the papers this morning all full of it. What a—what a——"

The handsome, manly-looking young fellow spoke out boldly and well in his first sentence; then as the beautiful face before him grew slowly pale, and a look of mingled indignation and contempt began to grow upon it, and his hand was not taken, he began to trail off and stammer. Finally he stopped short, as if waiting for the prompter to help him on.

"Were you going to say 'What a mistake,' Sir George Carlow?" came at last, in the voice which had thrilled him over-night.

"No, no!" he cried, excitedly; "really no. I came because I—"

"Was labouring under a grave error, sir."

"No, indeed, Miss Deane. Love, admiration, respect—my devotion—I really——"

"Will you allow me to finish?" said the lady, coldly. "You are very young, sir."

"I? Oh, come, Miss Deane. Really I must be years older than you."

"A woman who has known trouble, sir, soon grows old. I thank you for your warm congratulations. I had just been writing to you."

"Oh, Miss Deane!" he said, setting down his hat quickly, and raising his hands.

"But there is no need to send the letter now," and she tore it up. "Here is your present, which I cannot accept."

"Oh, don't say that," he cried. "I know you prefer pearls."

"There are jewels, Sir George Carlow, that I love more dearly," she said, with her lips quivering slightly. "The respect and esteem of the world—the love of one——" She paused, for her emotion choked her for the moment, and not trusting herself to

finish her sentence, she signed to her visitor to follow, and stepping quickly to the folding doors, threw them open.

There was the quick rustling of paper, and a pale, careworn, looking man dropped the sheet in which he had been reading the notice of the last night's performance, to add to the heap on the carpet beside the couch on which he lay.

"Fred, dearest," she cried, quickly, as she ran to his side and placed her arm upon his shoulder, "this is Sir George Carlow who sent me the note with that handsome bracelet. He has called this morning to congratulate me upon the success of the piece."

"Miss Deane, I swear I—I——"

"My wife understands, sir," said the invalid, raising himself a little more, and a red spot burned in each of his white cheeks. "I understand."

He took the hand which rested upon his shoulder and held it tightly between his own, as the young officer's eyes fell before the intense gaze which robbed him of the power of speech. At last he faltered:—

"I beg your pardon. I did not know."

Then there seemed to be a blank, and the visitor was brought up short in the street by a sharp poke in the chest from the ferrule of a cane.

"You here!" came in the deep Sir Anthony Absolute tone. "I say, you've never had the infernal impudence to call on Miss Deane?"

"Miss Deane!"

His cue.

Shame, rage, and mortification had been seething in the young man's breast, and here was the opportunity to vent it upon one whom he could attack.

"You old scoundrel," he roared. "This is all through you."

"Through me, puppy?"

"Yes, through you. Why didn't you tell me that Miss Deane was a married lady?"

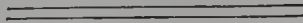
"I'll tell you, my excitable young Lothario," cried the old man, with a laugh of triumph, as he bore the other back against the railings of the nearest house with the point of his cane. "Because I don't choose to open my lips to every young rake who comes hanging about a stage door, for one reason, and for another, because a certain paying portion of the public—curse them!—can't find so much satisfaction in seeing a married lady act as one who bears the title 'Miss.' And besides, sir, because it was

not my business to tell you. Married, yes; God bless her for as sweet and pure a lady as ever walked this earth! That's her husband. You've seen him, I can see. But I'll tell you now. I knew him years ago, when he was hawking last night's piece from house to house, and not a manager would read it—that play about which London is raving now. I knew him when he broke down in poverty and misery, two years ago; and since then that woman has worked and slaved and drudged through the most miserable toil of the profession, till last night, when she took London by storm—the heroine of her disappointed husband's comedy; and, bless her! I helped her—I, Rob Roff, the 'old scoundrel' who wouldn't help you to pester her with what you—you verdant boy—dare to call your love. An old scoundrel, eh?"

"Mr. Roff," said the young man, drawing himself up, and speaking slowly and well, "I beg your pardon; it was in ignorance I insulted a true gentleman, and I express my regret. Tell me if I can do more?"

There was a brief pause, during which Roff swelled out his chest and tried to speak; but no reply came, and the young man raised his hat and walked away.

"And I dried up and hadn't a word to say!" panted the old man at last. "An officer and a gentleman, after all."



Portraits.

MR. J. H. BARNES.

IN spite of his continued juvenility, the fact remains that it is a quarter of a century since Mr. John Henry Barnes, hailing from a market-town in Oxfordshire, made his first appearance on the London stage. One of his earliest engagements in the metropolis was to be Mr. Irving's "double" in *The Bells* during its first run. He next joined Mr. H. J. Montague at the Globe, subsequently going to Drury Lane, the Strand, and other theatres. Intelligent, ambitious, handsome, buoyant, and endowed with the infinite capacity for taking pains, he soon made himself remarked, even in the small parts that fell to his lot in those days, as a young actor of whom very good things might be expected. And his merits were soon recognised. In 1874-5, after taking the lead at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, he went on a tour with Miss Adelaide Neilson in America, there to support her as Romeo, Benedick, Orlando, Claude Melnotte, Joseph Surface, and Claudio in *Measure for Measure*. Returning to England, he had the good fortune to find a friend in Samuel Phelps, who gave him invaluable instruction, and of whom he speaks to this day in terms that do equal honour to his head and to his heart. To the aged actor's Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, one of the most faultless performances of our time, he played Egerton. Mr. Irving attracted him to the Lyceum, where he appeared as Osric in *Hamlet*, Fitzharding in *The Iron Chest*, Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, and King René in *Iolanthe*. At the St. James's, under the management of Mr. Hare and Mr. Kendal, he achieved a distinct success as Captain Crosstree in the versified *Black-Eyed Susan*. Subsequently, he was associated with Mme. Ristori at Drury Lane as Macduff and Essex in *Elizabeth*, and then, at the Lyceum, with Miss Anderson, as Pygmalion, Ingomar, and the Duc d'Orléans in *Tragedy and Comedy*. Mr. Barnes has paid frequent visits to America, and each time with pleasant results. Of late years he has shown a special aptitude for character-drawing, particularly in *Rosemary*. His sympathies, however, are really with the romantic drama, to the immediate revival of which he looks forward with confidence, and in which his broadly effective style, akin to that of the "old school," could not fail to be of material service. In the event of Knowles's *Virginus* being reproduced, Mr. Barnes might well be asked to be the principal character therein.



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MR. J. H. BARNES.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

RARELY has a year opened more auspiciously than 1897, in so far as the public attendance is concerned. Every west-end theatre, with any pretensions to an attractive programme, has been well filled during the month, while in certain instances—such as Drury Lane—it has been impossible to find room for many of those who have nightly besieged the doors. Now that the holidays are over, it remains, however, to be seen whether this satisfactory state of things is permanent or transitory.

BLACK EY'D SUSAN; OR, ALL IN THE DOWNS.

Revival of DOUGLAS JERROLD'S Famous Nautical Drama, in Two Acts, at the Adelphi Theatre, December 23.

William	Mr. WILLIAM TERRISS	Blue Peter	Mr. CHAS. FISHER
Captain Crosstree ..	Mr. CHARLES FULTON	Seaweed	Mr. JARVIS WIDDICOMB
Hatchett.. ..	Mr. OSCAR ADYE	Quid	Mr. WEBB DARLEIGH
Raker	Mr. H. TRANT FISCHER	Lieut. Pike	Mr. WILLIAM DEMPSEY
Doggrass.. ..	Mr. J. D. BEVERIDGE	Midshipman	Mr. DENTON
Admiral	Mr. LUIGI LABLACHE	Ploughshare	Mr. VINCENT
Jacob Twig	Mr. CYRIL MELTON	Susan	Miss MILLWARD
Gnatbrain	Mr. HARRY NICHOLLS	Dolly Mayflower ..	Miss Vane FEATHERSTON

No happier idea could have occurred to the Adelphi management than that of reviving Douglas Jerrold's famous drama, *Black Ey'd Susan*, in its original form, dressed and mounted exactly after the fashion of its first performance. In this way all feeling of anachronism is avoided, and the piece allowed to exercise its full effect. Even when Captain Crosstree exclaims, "Come what may, I must and will possess her!" the statement is permitted to pass without a laugh, as being quite in keeping with the spirit of the play. In point of fact, one regards the performance as one is apt to regard some old print, which faithfully reflects the habits of a bygone time, and which is all the more interesting because of its accuracy. But,

apart from this, Jerrold's drama contains a story which, divested of its extraneous wrappings, is so true, so pathetic, and so human, as to render its appeal to the emotions perennially irresistible. That even the most hardened playgoer could witness the parting of William and Susan with dry eyes we do not believe, particularly when the scene is played with the tenderness and power exhibited at the Adelphi by Mr. William Terriss and Miss Jessie Millward. Everybody knows how, seventy years ago, T. P. Cooke took the town by storm by his marvellously fine impersonation of William, but that it was in any way superior to Mr. Terriss's we are seriously disposed to doubt. For Mr. Terriss has himself been a sailor, as indeed one might guess from his frank, cheery, and open-hearted manner; and in the present revival, besides acting superbly throughout, he shows that he can spin a yarn, sing a song, and dance a hornpipe with the best. Mr. Terriss is, in short, the life and soul of the play, which shows no symptom of flagging while he is on the stage. Nor does Miss Millward deserve less praise for her really beautiful and superbly womanly portrait of the devoted Susan. Excellent service is also done by Mr. Charles Fulton, Mr. Harry Nicholls, and Miss Vane Featherston. The piece is most tastefully mounted, the glimpses afforded of old Deal and the Downs, with the fleet at anchor in the distance, being particularly attractive; while the final scene, disclosing the deck of the ship, crowded with sailors and soldiers, anxious to pay their last tribute of respect to poor William, is a triumph. As *Black Ey'd Susan* only lasts a couple of hours, we have, in addition, a revival of that threadbare, musty old domestic comedy, *All that Glitters is not Gold*, which might more fittingly have been left to enjoy the repose which few, we fancy, would be inclined to grudge it.

A PIERROT'S LIFE.

A Play without words, in Three Acts, by F. BEISSIER. Music by M. COSTA. Produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, January 8.

Pierrot	Mlle. LITINI	Pochinet	Signor EGIDIO ROSSI
Louissette	Mme. GERMAINE ETY	Julot	Mons. JACQUINET
Fifine	Mlle. GEORGETTE FAURENS	Petit Pierrot	La Petite GAUDRY

If barely rising to the same high level reached by *L'Enfant Prodigue*, the new "play without words" is distinctly a work of great merit. Its plot is of necessity simple, and based upon incidents easy of communication, by means of pantomime, to the audience. Pierrot loves Louissette, a virtuous and hard-

working little milliner, but is too modest to propose. Meanwhile Julot, his wealthy rival, endeavours to supplant him, but is repulsed. A sympathetic neighbour, Pochinet, appears presently, and proceeds to instruct Pierrot in the art of love-making with such good results that the latter eventually succeeds in winning Louissette's hand. Unfortunately, Pierrot proves to be rather an unsatisfactory husband. He allows himself to be led into evil ways by Julot, neglects his wife, and at length yields to the fascinations of a certain Fifine, to please whom he robs Louissette of her savings, and flies to the enchantress's arms. In the final act Pierrot returns home, like the prodigal son, unkempt, penniless, and in rags; but by the good offices of Pochinet, seconded by the unconscious efforts of the little son who has been born to him during his absence, he contrives to secure his wife's forgiveness. As regards the acting, Signor Egidio Rossi's performance as Pochinet is singularly fine. His power of facial display is wonderful, while he uses gesture with the same freedom and effect that the ordinary actor employs speech. We welcome Signor Rossi as a genuinely great artist in his chosen domain. The remaining characters were all in adequate hands, while Monsieur M. Costa's music claims mention for its graceful tunefulness and refined style.

THE SORROWS OF SATAN.

A Play, in Four Acts, adapted by HERBERT WOODGATE and PAUL M. BERTON from MISS MARIE CORELLI's novel of that name. Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, January 9.

Prince Lucio Rimanez ..	Mr. LEWIS WALLER	Two Servants	{ Mr. PHILIP DARWIN
Geoffrey Tempest ..	Mr. YORKE STEPHENS		Mr. LENNOX
Earl of Elton ..	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP	Lady Sybil	Miss GRANVILLE
Viscount Lynton ..	Mr. TRIPP EDGAR	Duchess of Launceston ..	Mrs. SAKER
Duke of Launceston ..	Mr. C. W. GARTHORNE	Mavis Clare ..	Miss E. BRINSLEY SHERIDAN
Sir Thomas Tenby ..	Mr. GEORGE ROLLIT	Diana Chesney ..	Miss ROSE DUPRE
Morgeson	Mr. L. F. CHAPUY	Miss Charlotte Fitzroy ..	Miss CHARLOTTE MORLAND
Bentham	Mr. GEORGE HUMPHERY	Lady Mary Spencer ..	Miss ALLEYN
Ellis	Mr. COMPTON COUTTS	Mrs. Simmons	Miss ALICE JOHNSON
Amiel	Mr. EDWARD O'NEIL		

The Devil has been presented to us in many strange guises and under numerous diverse conditions; but to place him on the stage attired as a modern Exquisite, wearing patent leather boots, fashionably-cut frock-coat and shining "topper," is surely the most certain way to undermine our belief in his superhuman powers and awful majesty. This, nevertheless, is the step taken by the adapters of Miss Marie Corelli's "famous" novel, *The Sorrows of Satan*; and were there no other reason—as a matter of fact there is, as we shall presently show, no lack of hardly less conclusive causes—it would be of itself

sufficient to jeopardise the success of the piece. But, apart from this, Messrs. Woodgate and Berton exhibit in their version so little literary skill, such a poverty of invention, and so constant a reliance upon the feeblest and most threadbare conventions of the stage, as to draw down upon their work the wholesale condemnation of the least exacting admirer of the serious drama. Their play is as ill-constructed as it is baldly written, while even the melodramatic scenes, judged from no higher standpoint than that of their class, are poorly conceived. Personally we have never been able to discover, save for an isolated idea or passage here and there, much to admire in Miss Marie Corelli's "famous" novel, but we readily concede that it is a masterpiece compared with the tawdry and unsatisfactory play drawn from it by Messrs. Woodgate and Berton. The story is almost too well known to demand recapitulation here. Suffice it that Lucifer, "Son of the Morning," has been condemned to inhabit this world, under the name of Prince Lucio Rimanez, the condition of his sojourn being that he shall use his best endeavours to tempt mortals to their ruin, but that only when his wiles are successfully resisted shall the fact bring him one step nearer Heaven. The idea has elements of greatness in it, although manifestly unsuited to stage treatment. The Prince encounters a poverty-stricken author, one Geoffrey Tempest, endows him with five millions sterling, introduces him into society, and finally secures for him the hand of Lady Sybil, daughter of the Earl of Elton. Despite her outspoken admission that she cares nothing for him, and merely sells herself to the highest bidder, Geoffrey takes her rapturously to his arms, only to find her a few months later offering herself body and soul to the Prince, who she unblushingly declares has awakened in her breast a passion "great beyond words." Disdainfully repulsed, Sybil commits suicide, while Geoffrey resignedly accepts the Prince's offer to accompany him on board his yacht *The Flame*. Off they go accordingly, apparently in search of the North Pole, inasmuch as the concluding act of the piece finds them in "a Sea of Ice," where the yacht, after Geoffrey has renounced the Devil and all his ways, is wrecked. A commonplace tableau, depicting the apotheosis of Lucifer, clad in shining armour and a red cloak, brings this preposterous and singularly foolish play to an end. Among the performers, Mr. Lewis Waller is alone entitled to praise for his fine embodiment of Prince Lucio. True, he almost entirely neglected to give any indication of the supernatural attributes of the character, but as a piece of finished declamatory work his performance was of a really splendid kind. The remaining

parts were either unsuitably cast, or of too shadowy a nature to deserve notice.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

A Mystery Play, with Music, in Four Acts, by G. G. COLLINGHAM. Founded on JOHN BUNYAN'S Immortal Allegory. Produced at the Olympic Theatre, December 24.

Apollyon	W. L. ABINGDON	Speranza	ESME BERINGER
Glorious .. .. .	.. FRANK CELLI	Madame Bubble .. .. .	.. MARY MILTON
Fairspeech .. .. .	.. ARNOLD LUCY	Florimonde .. .. .	.. VERA BERINGEE
Holdworld .. .. .	.. QUINTON PEARSON	Isolde .. .. .	.. ROMA ST. JOHN-BRENON
Pamper .. .. .	.. GILBERT PORTEOUS	Malignity .. .. .	.. LAURA JOHNSON
Graspall .. .. .	.. EDWIN SHEPHERD	Melusina .. .. .	.. EMILY FITZROY
Raphael .. .. .	.. COURTENAY THORPE	Sabra .. .. .	.. IRENE SAN CAROLO
Faithful .. .. .	.. GEORGE W. COCKBURN	Crafty .. .. .	.. MAUDE ST. JOHN
Death .. .. .	.. LESLY THOMSON	Christian .. .. .	.. GRACE HAWTHORNE
Giant Despair .. .. .	.. JOHN WEBB		

What, one is tempted to ask, would be the feelings of honest John Bunyan were he to know that his great work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, had been seized upon for stage purposes and converted into a play? Profoundly as the news might affect him, how much more indignant would he be on learning that the dramatised version was in truth no play at all, but simply an extravaganza or pantomime, the most striking features of which were the sumptuous dresses and splendid scenic effects! If the worthy tinker is still capable of thinking, the intelligence surely were sufficient to make him turn in his grave. As matters stand, it at least behoves all admirers of his work to protest in the clearest and most decisive terms against so unpardonable an act of vandalism. Mr. Collingham may insist as long and as often as he pleases that he approached his task in a spirit of the deepest reverence. The only possible answer to such a declaration is that Mr. Collingham's sense of reverence must, in that case, approach so nearly to a negative quantity that even the most conscientious inquirer may be excused if he fails to discover any trace of it. Conceive the literary demoralisation of the man who can turn Bunyan's hero into a gay and wealthy youth, hardly distinguishable from the "first boy" of pantomime experience, while Apollyon is made to assume the shape of a tawdry imitation of the Demon King, and who deals with story and characters throughout in a similar vein of bad taste. Mr. Collingham has publicly defended his conduct on the grounds that his play was never intended to be an exact transcript from Bunyan's book, but merely claimed to be founded upon it. The excuse is almost worse than the crime. If Mr. Collingham desired to be so understood, why, in the name of common decency, did he not announce his piece as an original burlesque suggested by *The Pilgrim's Progress*?

Inasmuch as the adaptation struggled on for a fortnight only, and was then consigned to the limbo of forgetfulness, we need say little more about it, save what is needed for purposes of record. The story opens in Castle Joyous, where Christian, a gay young spark of the period, is discovered surrounded by friends, courtiers, parasites, and libertines. Presently he is summoned by Raphael to resign these mundane pleasures, and to at once set forth on his journey to the Celestial City. His wanderings lead him to the Narrow Way, the House of Pride (where he successfully, although not without some dallying, resists the overtures of a handsome courtesan named Melusina), Vanity Fair (an exquisite spectacle), the Dungeon of Giant Despair, the Valley of the Shadow (*sic*), and at last to his final goal, at which stage Speranza, type of pure love, is found awaiting him. Very beautiful and impressive are, we admit, the scenes presented; but whatever praise they deserve is due alone to the scene-painter and the costumier. Upon the acting there is no need to dwell. The part of Christian is wholly unsuited to a woman, and Miss Grace Hawthorne ought never to have attempted it. As Apollyon Mr. W. L. Abingdon was little more than the conventional demon of Christmas time. The best playing came from Mr. G. W. Cockburn, exceedingly earnest and powerful as Faithful, and Miss Laura Johnson, who furnished an extremely forcible and typical portrait of Malignity. Miss Esmé Beringer made a tender and beautiful Speranza, while her sister, Vera, displayed genuine promise in the small part of Florimonde.

THE EIDER DOWN QUILT.

A Farce in Three Acts, by TOM S. WOTTON. Produced at Terry's Theatre, December 21.

Alberto da Bologna	Mr. H. DE LANGE	Colenutt	Mr. CHARLES TERRIC
Sir John de Caudebec, J.P.	Mr. NICOL PENTLAND	Sybil	Miss AUDREY FORD
Captain Bernard	Mr. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR	Lucy Pemberton	Miss ETHEL MATTHEWS
Dick	Mr. A. E. MATTHEWS	Rosamond Denison	Miss SPENCER BRUNTON
Peter Mumforth	Mr. FREDERICK VOLPE	Patricia	Miss FANNY BROUGH

The management which could for a moment believe that so thin and flimsy a farce as *The Eider Down Quilt* would be regarded as sufficient for an evening's entertainment must have a curiously mistaken impression of what the public considers a fair return for its money. The plot can indeed be indicated in a few lines. A lady named Patricia, having by error entered a gentleman's bedroom, throws a quilt over its occupant's head, and then hurries away, convinced that she has stifled the unfortunate person. The action is witnessed by a waiter called Alberto,

who, disguising himself as a prince, uses his knowledge to force Patricia to favour his suit for the hand of her cousin Sybil, a young lady in the enjoyment of £15,000 a year. Subsequently, Alberto learns that the police are after him; the truth is revealed, and a conclusion, more or less satisfactory, reached. Mr. Wotton's wit is not of the best quality; while the drains he makes upon his listeners' powers of make-believe are almost pathetically conclusive of the poverty of his invention. The most pleasing features of the performance were the extremely clever impersonation by Mr. H. de Lange of the Italian waiter, and the brisk acting of Miss Fanny Brough. In front of *The Eider Down Quilt* was given a one-act play by "Charles Beckwith," said to be Mrs. W. K. Clifford, entitled *In Mary's Cottage*, a highly sentimental and exceptionally lugubrious little piece of no particular value. It has since been replaced by a revival of the well-known comedietta, *Delicate Ground*.

THE KEY TO KING SOLOMON'S RICHES, LIMITED.

A Rhodesian Drama, in Four Acts, by Miss ABBEY ST. RUTH. Produced at the Opéra Comique Theatre, December 23.

Hugh Baring	Mr. E. H. VANDERFELT	Ruth Baring	Miss ABBEY ST. RUTH
Coppall	Mr. F. MACDONNELL	Cissy Grant	Miss MABEL HARDINGE
Lazarus, alias Skinner	Mr. J. A. ARNOLD	Madame Raphael	Miss THORNTON
Crawler	Mr. GILBERT YORKE	Matilda Perkins	Mrs. MAT ROBSON
Sam	Miss AGNES PAULTON	Jane	Miss MARIANNE CALDWELL

To give anything like a detailed account of Miss Abbey St. Ruth's tedious and cumbersome play would be a waste of time and space. The authoress has described it as a "Rhodesian" drama, a circumstance which correctly suggests that the story is largely concerned with the country and the people over which Mr. Cecil Rhodes exercises so marked an influence. Bogus company promoting, City meetings, mine prospecting, Kaffir trading, and so forth, form a few of the ingredients of a plot which is developed at laborious length, and of which the chief feature is incoherency. With these episodes is interwoven a thread of a love tale, which shows how a certain Hugh Baring becomes enamoured of his ward, Cissy Grant, and is, indeed, on the point of marrying her, when, to her astonishment, the girl is informed that Baring is in reality her own father. Fortunately, further evidence reaches the couple in course of time, to the effect that Cissy had been changed at, or shortly after, birth by an unscrupulous old baby-farmer, and that consequently there is no bar to her union with Baring. Subsequently, additional proofs of a similiar but more substantial character are forthcoming, and

all ends happily for the virtuously disposed personages of the play. At long intervals in the piece could be detected occasional glimmers of dramatic intention ; but so overshadowed were these by the mass of puerile detail as scarcely to count for anything. Nothing in the acting calls for particular mention.

DRURY LANE PANTOMIME.

ALADDIN.

Produced on Boxing-night, December 26.

Aladdin	Miss ADA BLANCHE	Mrs. Twankay	Mr. DAN LENO
Princess Badroulbador ..	Miss DECIMA MOORE	Abanazar	Mr. HERBERT CAMPBELL
Sau-See	Miss CLARA JECKS	Chief Constable ..	Mr. FRED GRIFFITHS
Pekoe	Miss HELENE PILLANS	Washee-Washee ..	Mr. JOE GRIFFITHS
Spirit of Life ..	Miss FLORENCE DARLEY	Slave of the Lamp ..	PAUL CINQUEVALLI
Genius of the Ring ..	Miss G. SOMERSET	The Emperor	Mr. WALKER MARNOCK
Slave of the Ring ..	Mme. GRIGOLATI	Grand Vizier	Mr. FRITZ RIMMA
		Dancing Master ..	Mr. ERNEST D'AUBAN

Mr. Oscar Barrett has successfully stepped into the place rendered vacant by the regretted death of Sir Augustus Harris. Of the enormous labour and extensive knowledge required for the production of a Drury Lane pantomime, few, outside those who possess some experience of such things, can have any conception. And it is worth mentioning that, in addition to his London duties, Mr. Barrett has had to superintend the preparation of three provincial entertainments of a like character. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising if, at the initial performance of *Aladdin*, an occasional hitch was observable, or that in several instances, effects elaborately planned failed to be realised in their full splendour. Nevertheless, Mr. Barrett's first Drury Lane pantomime deserves, in point of taste, of elaborate mounting, and of amusing episodes, to rank with the most notable of its predecessors, albeit it presents no single scene of the colossal dimensions and almost barbaric magnificence such as was invariably a feature of all of Sir Augustus's later productions. The "book," written by Mr. Arthur Sturgess and Mr. Horace Lennard, is a very pretty example of its kind, while the various stage pictures, representing, to mention only a few, the Market-place of Dru-ree-Layne, the Garden of the Emperor's Palace, the Interior of the Cave, and Aladdin's Palace of Ivory and Pearl, are each, in its distinctive fashion, exquisitely beautiful specimens of pictorial and spectacular art. Nor is there any lack of honest, wholesome fun, a circumstance for which the appearance of Mr. Dan Leno as the Widow Twankay and Mr. Herbert Campbell as Abanazar is ample guarantee. Miss Ada Blanche and Miss Decima Moore, as Aladdin and the Princess

Badroulbador, act as delightfully as they sing, while M. Paul Cinquevalli accomplishes some marvellous feats in the way of plate-spinning, ball-throwing, and other forms of jugglery. A word of praise is also due to the graceful dancing of Miss Geraldine Somerset, the humorous frolics of the Brothers Griffiths, and the neat performance of Miss Clara Jecks. Altogether, a more attractive or sumptuous entertainment could not be desired.

IN PARIS.

L'Etranger, by M. A. Germain, at the Odéon, in spite of some weak points, has several good scenes. A dilapidated Don Juan, by name Simpson (M. Dieudonné), turns up after ten years' disappearance with a large fortune made in India, and by a concatenation of circumstances finds himself the rival of his son for the hand of the same girl. The girl (Mme. Depoix) loves the young man, and has promised to be his wife; and her father (M. Zazal) has given his consent. But the entry on the scene of the old rake, who threatens to ruin the father unless he gets the daughter in marriage, changes everything. The dilemma of the girl's father between his promise to the young man and financial dependence on Simpson is not very subtle, but is telling enough. However, in the end the young man carries off the prize, and old age is once more vanquished by youth. The girl brings this about by making her marriage with her lover a matter of necessity. The piece is interesting in spite of its crudeness, and a fair sprinkling of the lively element *à la Gyp* keeps the house in good humour.

Alexandre Dumas *père's* *Halifax* has been unearthed at the Odéon. It first appeared in 1842, and does not seem to have been much played since. The plot is laid in England and Scotland, and is the story of a favourite of Charles II., a certain "Sir" Dumbar, to whom Halifax acts as secretary and confidential adviser. In this capacity he is sent through England and Scotland on the delicate mission of finding the whereabouts of an illegitimate daughter Dumbar had forsaken in his youth, and to whom he now wishes to make reparation. Halifax is a kind-hearted, vain, and generous rogue, full of ready wit and resource—the type Dumas *père* loved to depict. With easy, affable manners and Dumbar's well-furnished purse he amuses himself on the different stages of the journey by personating a grand seigneur, and his numerous adventures, the tragic and droll situations in which his duplicity places him, form the principal theme of the

piece. Coquelin would have made a Halifax after Dumas' own heart. As it is, M. Chelles rendered the part with much natural talent and good humour. M. Prince made an excellent Tom Rick.

At the Théâtre de la Bodinière, *La Faute*, a romantic comedy in three acts, by M. Loriot Lecandey, is also the subject of a father's desertion of his illegitimate child, and the subsequent finding of the said child—a son—twenty-six years later, in the person of the *fiancé* of the young girl to whom he, the father, Jacques Renoux, has in ripe middle age offered his hand and heart. During those twenty-six years Renoux has become a celebrated author, whose works have been so much admired by his son's affianced bride that she has unconsciously fallen in love with him, and, despite his age and her former betrothal to his son, she accepts him. At this stage of the proceedings father and son learn their relationship to each other, and the excellent acting which here ensues on the part of M. Vois as the father and M. Paul Barbier as the son rescues the piece from too much sentimentality.

Le Sursis, at the Nouveautés, a vaudeville in three acts, by M. Sylvane and M. Gascogne, has given the Parisians as much pleasure as the famous *Champignon malgré lui*, of which *Le Sursis* is a sort of second edition. The notary of a dull provincial town, in his professional capacity, has made the acquaintance of a lively young widow, and become enamoured of her. He utilises a fifteen days' leave of absence from military service to make a little pleasure trip with her; conceals the fact of his having received the said leave of absence from his family, and quits the latter dressed, as is the wont of Frenchmen on such occasions, in his full regimentals. He has the misfortune to choose the very town where a garrison is quartered in which to pass his illicit honeymoon, and on arriving is at once taken for the commanding officer's ordinary, and has to suffer a thousand amusing and laughable indignities in that position, which he is forced to accept in silence, fearing scandal and worse were he to offer an explanation. The piece is admirably played by the artists of the Nouveautés. M. Lugné-Poë of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, has revived Björnson's *Au-delà des forces* with great success.

IN BERLIN.

At the Lessing Theatre *Das Oelkruglein*, a play in one act, by Gustava Sarrasin, and a three-act farce, *Jenseits der Liebe*, by Rudolf Stratz, saw the light on the same night. *Das Oelkruglein*

is a most amusing little piece. Dr. Heinrich Kramm, journalist and critic, deals in a more or less merciless way, in the columns of his paper, with those writers who have the misfortune to displease him. Among his victims are "Kurt von der Aue," the newest minor poet of a family journal, and Augier's piece "Die arme Löwin." It appears to the Doctor impossible that a husband should not suspect when the heavy household expenses of his establishment are defrayed by his wife's lover. He attributes it to his own wife's financial genius that she is able to set before him capons and giant asparagus, when her only resources, as far as he is concerned, are £10 a month. His jealousy is, however, awakened by an accident, and will not be appeased until the publisher of the family journal appears and offers a generous honorarium to Mr. "Kurt von der Aue," *alias* Mrs. Kramm. The simple plot is so charmingly treated, and the little side-thrusts at publishers, critics, and so forth, so amazingly contrived, that the piece had a decided success, and forms as good a curtain raiser as could be desired. *Jenseits der Liebe* is one of those pieces in which a risky subject becomes thoroughly unsympathetic through unskilful treatment. A divorced couple meet at a watering place, and attempt to renew the broken bond. This intention falls through owing to their mutual incompatibility of temper, but they wish to remain good friends—they shake hands heartily at the end—and the divorced wife marries in all haste the best friend of her former husband, who presumably will henceforth occupy the comfortable position of "the friend of the family." The piece failed, and deservedly so.

At the same theatre *Jedem das Seine*, a farce in three acts, by T. Kanzler and Hannes Fischer, has also been brought out. The story is most improbable; but it is never fair to criticise a farce on that ground. The crucial question is—Is it amusing? It may fairly be answered in the affirmative in the present instance. In this piece there are two husbands and two wives. Each couple has been divorced, and the two divorced husbands have married the two divorced wives. They have only to be brought together in suitable circumstances to give rise to as many droll situations as the authors please to imagine. This is done without any regard to rhyme or reason, and in the end, after the fun has gone fast and furious for some time, the original husbands remate with their original wives, and each one takes his own (*jedem das seine*).

Harakiri, a farce in four acts, which has been brought out at the Theater des Westens, is by a writer named Maxkempner-Hochstädt. A young advocate, whose prospects from a worldly point of view are extremely dubious, is counselled by his worthy father to

perform a "harakiri" on himself. As he does not know the meaning of the word, his father informs him that it is a Japanese expression for ripping one's self up. He advises the son to perform this act of self-destruction in a moral sense, and to marry a wealthy cousin, who is long since past her prime. The young man consents, and sets out to pay the lady a visit, with the intention of proposing to her. He does not know that she has died, leaving her large fortune to a young and pretty girl. When the suitor reaches the house his designs are already known, and a little plot is arranged between the young heiress and a mature lady friend, by which the latter is to personate the deceased lady. The young advocate falls in love with the heiress, who is represented as a penniless maiden, and do what he will he cannot bring himself to propose to his *soi-disant* cousin. He declares his love to the object of his affections, by whom it is reciprocated, and all goes merry as a marriage bell. There is a second love affair in *Harakiri*, in which the advocate's sister is involved. She is loved by a painter, who, to ingratiate himself with her, throws her pet dog into the water and then jumps in after it to save it from drowning. In this benevolent enterprise he succeeds, and is rewarded for his bravery by the hand of the young lady. It cannot be said that there is any great dramatic talent displayed in *Harakiri*, but it served its purpose of amusing the public, and to that extent must be described as a success.

At the Neues Theater M. Sardou's *Marcelle* has been performed in a German translation. The piece is not one of the author's best, and was intended, we believe, originally for an American public. It has afforded considerable interest, however, to Berlin playgoers by reason of a little incident which occurred on the first night. Elise Sauer is, next to Agnes Sorma, the most talented of all the young German actresses, and she played the part of *Marcelle* with the greatest charm. In the second act, where she is entreated by her lover to tell him the whole truth about the mystery that hangs over her past life, which has been stainless in spite of the suspicions which wrongfully attach to her, the actress began the painful story with downcast eyes and quiet tone. By degrees she spoke more loudly, and as her agitation increased the words came from her lips tumultuously, her sentences were broken, she began to stammer, to repeat herself, to tremble and sway to and fro. The whole house sat breathless before a representation such as only an actress of the first rank, a Duse or a Bernhardt, can give. Then the actress fell to the ground, her lover went to her aid, and the curtain fell. It rose again, in response to tumultuous applause, and disclosed Elise Sauer lying in a dead faint upon the

stage. She was restored, and was fortunately able to proceed with her part after some delay. When she next made her appearance it was to meet with a reception such as has fallen to few actresses during the present generation. She had played her part with a fidelity to nature which transcended art, and became the actual living of the character upon the stage.

Der Lange Preusse, a drama in four acts, by Rudolf Stratz, produced at the Royal Schauspielhaus, is a success. It is an historical drama, in which the love of the Polish Countess Wanda for *der lange Preusse* (the tall Prussian) Achin von Lohde, a German captain of horse in a Cossack Regiment, is the mainspring of the story. To describe the exciting incidents and hairbreadth escapes which fill the four acts of the play would occupy more space than is at our disposal. It must suffice to say that at a moment when the historical novel and drama are so much in vogue as at present, there could be no more taking subject for a play than this, the scene of which is laid in the year 1807, just before the battle of Friedland. It is a drama after Mr. Stanley Weyman's own heart.

IN VIENNA.

Der Grossberghofer, by J. Heimfelsen, has been successfully brought out at the Raimund Theatre. The author—a captain in the Tyrol Kaiserjäger regiment, whose real name is T. Kerausch—has applied himself to the imitation of Anzengruber's style with happy results. The story is hardly original, but it is very well told, and in parts is extremely touching. The old Prosser, the peasant owner of a property called the Grossberghof, hits upon a plan to keep his property instead of giving it over in due course to his son. He designs the yokel for the Church, and allows him to devote himself to study with the view of his becoming a priest. The youth does not relish the prospect, and “goes for a soldier.” A plan of the old man's to marry his daughter also comes to nothing. He himself gets into the hands of the usurers, and, in his desperation, gives ear to the advice of a rogue and vagabond to burn down the house and secure the insurance money. At the last moment his natural honesty induces him to refrain from the deed; but the house is burnt down through the revenge of a neighbour, and Prosser is arrested and charged with the crime. A poor devil who loves the daughter appears in the nick of time and makes manifest the old man's innocence. The latter is acquitted, and becomes reconciled to his children. There

is a great deal of good work in the piece; the characters are well drawn, the language is faithful to the class to which the people belong, and the construction shows much technical skill. The end of the third act, in which the poor daughter first prays before the picture of her dead mother and then dreamily sings a song, is poetically conceived and extremely effective.

After an interval of two years, Carl Millöcker has again made his appearance with a new operetta, which has been brought out at the Theater an der Wien. The book is by Hugo Wittmann, and the piece is called *Nordlicht*. The scene is laid in Russia, and is extraordinarily exciting and interesting. The young Count Constantine Teffelski has written a book called *Nordlicht*, which the Mayor of Wilna says will bring him to the gallows. He flees, and hides himself in the dwelling of a young laundress, Marina by name, who is the god-daughter of Constantine's mother. Marina hides him, although the affair is displeasing to her, since she is awaiting her betrothed, a ladies' tailor, named Agathon, with whom she is to proceed in the short space of an hour to the altar. The Count is discovered, and, as there is no other way out of the difficulty, he declares that he is the ladies' tailor, and allows himself to be betrothed to Marina. When the real bridegroom arrives, he is arrested and clapped in prison. There is much playing at cross-purposes until the difficulty is solved by the mandate of the Tsar, who, recognising that the book is the work of a hot-headed young man, but one full of patriotic zeal, annuls the process against him, and declares the marriage with Marina to be of no validity. *Nordlicht* was very favourably received.

Among other plays produced may be mentioned *Die Romantischen*, a comedy in verse, by Edmond Rostand, the German by Ludwig Fulda, at the Burg Theater—a success; *Die Verliebten* a comedy by Maurice Donnay, which was only partially successful; and *Das letzte Ideal*, a drama in one act, by L'Epine and Alphonse Daudet, which did not commend itself to the public.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

Miss Helyett, the bright little operetta by MM. Audran and Boucheron, which some years ago drew all Paris to the Bouffes Parisiens, and which has since been revived successfully on more than one occasion, has just been presented for the first time to a Roman audience in its original form. Some time ago it was played in one of the chief Italian cities as a simple comedy

denuded of M. Audran's music excepting that accompanying the concluding couplets, but last year the Gargano company gave a performance of the complete work, and, meeting with the most encouraging success, carried it last month to the capital and produced it there at the Teatro Nazionale. The scene of the succession of humorous episodes which constitute the plot is the Hotel Val Montel at a popular health resort in the Pyrenees. Among those in temporary residence there are an evangelical preacher named Smithson, who is the author of a number of pamphlets dealing in an ultra-puritanical spirit with the ethics of female modesty and similar delicate subjects, and his daughter Helyett, a young woman as severely plain in her attire and as strictly proper in her views as her parent. While out alone for a stroll in the mountains one day Helyett has the misfortune to slip over the edge of a precipice, but is saved from a tragic death by a tree in which her clothes become entangled, and rescued while thus suspended and carried back unconscious to the hotel. When her senses return she is horrified at the thought of the undignified position in which her rescuer must have found her, and, after a consultation with her father, decides that the only course open to her to cover the disgrace by which she is almost overwhelmed is to become his wife. A difficulty presents itself, however, in the fact that nobody can tell her who her rescuer was. A determined search is then made, and eventually a sketch of the occurrence, seen by chance in an album, points to the identity of Paul Landrin, a young painter, with the hero whom they are seeking. Landrin does not deny that it was he who released the sensitive maiden from her awkward position, and, being already in love with Helyett, has no objection at all to concluding the affair with a wedding. The operetta was both well played and well sung, and was accorded a reception which could not have been far short of that it met with in Paris. Another production which must be cited as one of the successes of the past month is that of Signor G. Antona Traversi's comedy *Il Braccialeto*, which made its appearance at Milan. We doubt whether the new work did not mainly obtain the public approval by reason of its appeal to the *bourgeois* sympathies of the audience. For its humour it depends upon the shortcomings of a wealthy nobleman, and these shortcomings are vividly contrasted with the virtue of characters moving in lower circles of society. Marquis Oneglia, who has come from the Riviera to Turin in order to further designs upon the wife of Signor Monti, a money-changer, tempts the lady with the offer of a valuable bracelet. Signora Monti, who has a good deal of the coquette in her temperament, cares nothing for the marquis; but, being

extremely anxious to obtain possession of so fine an article of jewelry, gives him to understand that she would accept the present if she could only devise a satisfactory explanation to offer her husband. Signor Monti's practice of making his wife a present of a thousand lire every year supplies a means out of the difficulty. It is arranged that Signora Monti shall ask her husband to buy her the bracelet, and the jeweller is instructed to sell it to him for the sum of a thousand lire, and to look to the marquis for the remainder of its cost. All seems to promise well, and Signor Monti duly sets out to comply with his wife's request. Disappointment is, however, in store, for another lady happens to have fallen passionately in love with the bracelet, and she makes things so uncomfortable for her husband that for the sake of domestic peace he rushes off to the jeweller's, arrives there first, and is mistaken by the jeweller for Signor Monti, and receives the coveted article for a thousand lire. The marquis duly pays the difference, and does not discover the mistake which has occurred until he witnesses the presentation of the bracelet to the second lady. The comedy then concludes with the discovery of the whole scheme by Signor Monti, and a severe admonition on his part to the erring nobleman never again to interfere in the marital relations of a hard-working and honest citizen. Signore Reiter, Andò, and Grammatica, and Signori Leighab and Carini, who played the leading parts, contributed greatly to the successful result of the performance.

IN MADRID.

In *La Fiera*, the latest dramatic product of his pen, Señor Perez Galdos has undertaken the daring task of teaching all political parties, without distinction, a lesson in common-sense and humanity. He strongly condemns anything approaching political fanaticism, and in making this fact evident he attacks with equal vigour all those extremists of despotic or of democratic tendencies who never seem to be blessed with sufficient discretion to know that the forcing of an issue to the arbitrament of civil war before any real effort has been made to bring the matter to a peaceful termination is bound to do their country far more harm than good. As the groundwork upon which to set forth his views, Señor Galdos has selected a period in the history of Spain when sanguinary conflicts between Absolutists and Liberals were of daily occurrence. The scene is laid in the town of Urgel, and the story discloses that ferocity and cruelty

on both sides which is almost inseparable from an embittered domestic war. In the midst of the horrors of the conflict there eventually stands forth from each side a person in whom some humanity is still left, and under the influence of their counsels of moderation the passion of the opposing parties is somewhat toned down ; and the disposition towards a suspension of hostilities which is thus aroused is then carried into effect through the almost simultaneous death of the leader of each party. This position leaves the two peacemakers triumphant, and thus the drama ends. It is not often that the political element has met with good fortune on the stage, and Señor Galdos must certainly be congratulated on having done as much with it as any other author. There is little doubt, nevertheless, that he might have achieved something still better if he had reserved his plot for a novel. *La Nieta de Don Quijote*, a new farce by Señores Jimenez Prieto and Montesinos, was produced very successfully at the Teatro Martin. It contains nothing, however, to distinguish it in particular from the hundreds of short musical farces which are turned out every year for the Spanish stage.

IN NEW YORK.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree, continuing his engagement at the Knickerbocker, has presented *Trilby*—in which he accomplished the remarkable feat of reviving interest in a play generally declared by newspapers and quidnuncs to be “dead”—*A Bunch of Violets*, which was, if possible, even better received than on Mr. Tree's original appearance here in the piece, and *Hamlet*, in which he is not accounted great. Mr. John Hare reappeared at the same theatre on January 4, giving us a delightful character study of an elderly racing gentleman, in Mr. Pinero's comedy, *The Hobby Horse*, now seen for the first time in America. It has been better received than on its initial appearance in London, the intertwining of grave and gay interests not offending American susceptibilities to the extent that it did in London a decade ago. Mr. Sydney Grundy's play, *The Late Mr. Castello*, has been recognised as a thoroughly characteristic work. The chief parts are played by Mr. Felix Morris (Sir Pinto Wanklyn) and Mr. J. K. Hackett (Captain Trefusis). Miss Ada Rehan as Lady Teazle, supported by Mr. Charles Richman as Charles Surface, Mr. George Clarke as Joseph, and Mrs. Gilbert as Mrs. Candour, all excellent selections, have been drawing large houses to Daly's Theatre. *Much Ado About Nothing* followed, but not as Shak-

spere wrote it. The play was acted in five scenes, each forming one act. The character of Ursula was turned into a part for that excellent comedienne, Mrs. Gilbert, and a further barbarity was the introduction into the play of one "Innogen," the mother of Hero. Miss Rehan as Beatrice was rather disappointing in her bantering scenes with Benedick; she was domineering and hectoring. Mr. Charles Richman gave an excellent performance of the lover, though it was not always easy with any show of loyalty, to play up to Miss Rehan's inconsistencies. Mr. William Griffiths gave a faithful and creditable rendering of Dogberry. Another comedy of the kind that only Mr. Charles Hoyt could write has been produced at the authors' theatre. Mr. Hoyt seldom experiences failure, and *A Contented Woman*, if not his best, is certainly a very smart and a very American piece of work, and one that may be relied on to be quite as successful as its many predecessors. Mr. Richard Mansfield has produced a romantic comedy by Mr. H. Greenough Smith, entitled *Castle Sombras*, which is dull from beginning to end. Not even all the force at Mr. Mansfield's command could raise it above the level of poor melodrama. Mr. Edward Rose's adaptation of *Under the Red Robe* has been produced at the Empire Theatre with every favourable sign. As a play pure and simple it has not been kindly dealt with by the critics, but as a vehicle for acting and costumes and scenery few can deny its merits. Mr. William Faversham is the Gil de Berault, and manages to hide the inconsistencies of the character in a remarkable way. Miss Viola Allen gave a charming impersonation of Renée, and a masterly character study of Richelieu—as he is presented, be it borne in mind—was given by the versatile Mr. J. E. Dodson.

Echoes from the Green Room.

No ordinary disappointment, as we have already stated, awaited the playgoing world towards the end of the year. On the day after the superb revival at the Lyceum of *Richard III.*, Sir Henry Irving, while going down stairs at his house, missed his footing, fell, and twisted his knee so severely that he had to lie up for some time. It was no question of an understudy; Richard is the piece, and the only Richard of to-day is our premier actor. Before long, in the result, his theatre had to be closed. Miss Ellen Terry, refreshed by a holiday in the south of France, is to reappear as Imogen on the 23rd of January—this time to the Iachimo of Mr. Cooper-Cliffe—and is now occupied with preparations for the production of *Madame Sans-Gêne*. Sir Henry Irving was able by the middle of January to go on a visit to friends in Kent, and is slowly but surely recovering from the effects of his most unfortunate accident.

THE widespread interest aroused by the revival of *Richard III.* is shown in the numerous accounts of it in the London correspondence of the chief provincial papers. One of these was sent to Glasgow by Mr. J. F. Nisbet, newspaper editor, philosopher, essayist, and dramatic critic, who, for one, has successfully disproved the old assertion that to write much is to write badly. "Irving's personality," he says, "happens to be peculiarly rich in the elements of the weird, the sinister, the sardonic, the grimly humorous, the keenly intellectual; and any character into which these qualities can be introduced by him remains indelibly stamped upon the mind as a great creation. As a compendium of the Irving personality, I am not sure that Richard does not excel in a considerable measure both Louis XI. and Mephistopheles. The new Richard holds the spectator as securely with his glittering eye as ever did the Ancient Mariner; and a curious effect, which I have never before remarked at the Lyceum, where so high a standard of excellence is maintained, is that in the presence of this colossal Plantagenet villain all the other *dramatis personæ* are dwarfed to nothingness. Absolutely, Irving's Richard is the most Satanic character I have ever seen on the stage."

It is not very long since the existence of a stage in England seemed to be doubted by the average Parisian. Nowadays he knows a little more, and the Comédie Française itself does not disdain at times to follow in the wake of the Lyceum. Last month, again, M. Augustin Filon devoted a feuilleton in the *Débats* to Miss Ellen Terry, heading it, "Une Grande Tragédienne." Her Imogen, he says, prevented him from seeing the absurdities of the play. Much more than that, she compelled him to accept them. He had only to open his eyes and his ears, and Imogen was before him. Her style is marked by a simplicity which, to unexperienced spectators, may seem the absence of art, but which, as a matter of fact, is the perfection of art. She entirely forgets that two thousand persons are following her movements and listening to her words. No glance at the audience, no intonation bearing traces of study, no obvious effort to delight! Désiré Nisaud, referring to the débuts of Rachel, remarked, "This girl showed me that I had never understood Corneille or Racine." The same might be said of Miss Ellen Terry, that "noble artist," in regard to Shakspeare.

M. FILON, it will be seen from this, has little or no patience with those who said that Shakspeare should be read instead of seen on the stage. He quotes the lines between Imogen and the attendant in the bedchamber scene :—

“What hour is it?”

“Almost midnight, madam.”

“If thou can’st wake by four o’ the clock,
I prithee call me.”

Acute as M. Filon is, he had not seen the significance of these words. Miss Terry’s performance served to enlighten him. “She seemed to say,” he writes, “‘Poor girl, it is not your fault if your mistress has sorrows which deprive her of sleep. Unhappy princesses are not the only people in the world. You need rest; get thee to bed, and if you oversleep yourself you are already forgiven.’ All this,” continues the critic, “is suggested by Miss Terry’s delivery of this simple speech.”

MADAME PATTI had a house party at Craig-y-Nos during the Christmas holidays, and is now at Monte Carlo with her husband.

MR. BANCROFT last month repeated at Sandringham his reading of *The Christmas Carol*, and had the honour of dining with the Prince and Princess of Wales.

MADAME MODJESKA, who has been gaining health on her ranche in southern California, is just now playing an engagement in San Francisco, her repertoire including *Macbeth*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Magda*. She will also appear for a short space at several other places in California. The famous actress has thus, it seems, reconsidered her determination to retire from the stage, though it is doubtful whether her health will stand the strain of constant acting.

MR. WILLARD will reappear in New York this year with three new plays, one by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the second by Mr. J. M. Barrie, and the third by a writer who for the present is anonymous. “I prefer,” the actor told an audience at Wallack’s Theatre, “to give my pieces their initial performances in America, for if they take well here I am always sure of their being successful in the old country.” It is said that two new characters Mr. Willard has in view are Robespierre, in a new play by Mr. William Young, and Tom Pinch, in an adaptation of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

MR. TREE and the principal members of his company last month lunched with several Ministers of State at Washington, afterwards taking tea with Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland at the White House.

It has been rather confidently stated that, in deference to the susceptibilities of the Sultan, all references in our pantomimes to the Armenian massacres have been prohibited. This is a slight exaggeration. Mr. Radford simply took exception to some lines in the pantomime at the Grand, and the management, we understand, at once decided to omit them altogether.

MISS NETHERSOLE will not return to America this year, but will produce several new plays in London.

Not a few eminent singers are in mortal fear of becoming too stout. They have suddenly found that bodily exercise is an important thing. Mme. Calvé and Mme. Nordica box; Mme. Emma Eames has taken to a bicycle; Mme. Melba wings clubs; Mlle. Trantman bowls; M. Edouard de Reszke practices daily with the foils.

MISS GERALDINE ULMAR lately arrived in New York on a brief visit to that city.

IN consequence of the severe illness of his wife, Miss Violet Vanbrugh, Mr. Arthur Bourchier is bringing her back to England some weeks before the time fixed for the end of their American tour. He has, however, made arrangement for a special tour of the *Chili Widow* through the United States.

IN the obituary notices of Signor Campanini, who recently died, little or no attention has been given to the fact that at one time he frequently appeared with his successor, M. Jean de Reszke. The latter, having been discovered by Colonel Mapleson, sang in London and elsewhere as far back as 1874-5. Then a baritone, he was Valentine to the Faust of Signor Campanini and the Marguerite of Mme. Christine Nilsson. His Don Giovanni was not successful, but the *Daily Telegraph* saw reason to hope that time would cure the faults of this "young and inexperienced" singer. And time has done much to cure them.

THE English-speaking rights of *Lorensocio*, the latest novelty produced by Mme. Sarah Bernhardt at the Renaissance, have been secured by Mr. George Alexander, who will probably allot the principal part to Miss Julia Neilson.

M. JEAN DE RESZKE will probably appear in *Siegfried* next season.

MR. ARTHUR COLLINS, as was expected, is to be the new lessee of Drury Lane Theatre.

MR. EDWARD TERRY and his company lately appeared before the Prince and Princess of Wales at Sandringham in *Holly Tree Inn* and *Love in Idleness*.

SIR A. C. MACKENZIE has finished his comic opera, which is shortly to be produced at the Savoy.

MR. LEONARD BOYNE was one of a house party at Lord Zetland's place in Yorkshire during the Christmas holidays, and arranged there an amateur performance of *A Pair of Spectacles*.

IN a new piece to be given at the Avenue, we are told, Mr. Forbes Robertson will appear as Nelson to the Lady Hamilton of Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

MR. SUGDEN is about to produce at the Olympic a melodrama entitled *The Free Pardon*.

MR. HORNER has secured the English and Colonial rights of *Le Sursis*, and is adapting it for Terry's Theatre.

His Little Dodge has been withdrawn—not too soon.

THE Strand Theatre, quite renovated, is to be reopened shortly by its lessee, Mr. John S. Clarke, who, unfortunately, cannot be prevailed upon, at least for the present, to reappear before the public. His chief actress will be Miss Florence Gerard. He intends to produce the American farcical comedy of *The Prodigal Father*, the cast including Mr. Harry Paulton, Mr. Charles Collette, Mr. Charles Weir, and Miss May Palfrey (Mrs. Weedon Grossmith).

MISS KATE VAUGHAN, happily well again, has returned to London from her trip to Australia and New Zealand.

PENDING the production of the new play by Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy, to follow *My Girl* at the Garrick Theatre, Mr. Brickwell has arranged with the Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company for a short season.

IT is expected that an adaptation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* will shortly appear at the Avenue, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as the heroine.

DR. IBSEN'S mode of life was rather fully described in *The Theatre* some months ago by Mr. E. J. Goodman, who made his acquaintance at Christiania. Another portrait of the dramatist is contributed by Mr. R. H. Sherard to the *Humanitarian*. Ibsen's only relaxation, we are told, is to spend an hour twice a day at the Grand Hotel, with a glass of aqua vitæ on his right hand and a glass of beer on his left, from which, as he reads, he takes alternate sips. He loves solitude, manifests a real dislike for family life, and never visits his son. In the whole course of his conversations with Mr. Sherard he laughed only once. He resents unfavourable criticism, calling the writer of an article in a Berlin paper a "pig-dog." He is never seen at the theatre, or in society, or at any place of entertainment. In a word, Dr. Ibsen is a "typical misanthrope."

MR. WILLIAM ARCHER is in his most pessimistic mood. The "Blight on the Drama" is the subject of an article which he contributes to the *Fortnightly Review*. Our chief dramatists are silent or find no hearers; our younger writers knock in vain at the managers' doors; the stage, a few revivals and adaptations apart, is entirely devoted to trivial and ephemeral, if not brutal and degrading, spectacles; our two-dozen theatres, in the course of a twelvemonth, produce one new play which may, at a pinch, be held to touch the confines of literature.

MR. FERNANDEZ, master of the Drury Lane Fund, performed the ceremony of cutting the Baddeley cake on Twelfth Night, previously acknowledging the generous hospitality of the late Sir Augustus Harris on such occasions.

DR. IBSEN'S new play, *John Gabriel Borkman*, is a study in the illusions of old age. Borkman himself is an ex-banker who has indulged in fraudulent speculation, and has "done time." He has now been living in retirement for eight years, during which he has indulged in the fancy that the community cannot do without him, and will invite him to take his old place among them. He is a Napoleon of finance who has failed, but who, unlike Napoleon, has philanthropic aspirations. At the outset of his career he jilted Rita Allmers (at the instance of a man who loved her and could be of service to Borkman), and married her sister instead. Now, after all these years, Mrs. Borkman and Rita live again in their schemes for the former's son. Mrs. Borkman hopes the youth will restore his family's honour; Rita will leave him all her money if he will assume her name. The young fellow elects to oblige neither, preferring a career of pleasure, and going off with a handsome married woman. Then old Borkman dies, and the sisters join hands over his body. It is a melancholy play, diving deep into the human heart and conscience, and pervaded by the spirit of pessimism. As a piece of dramatic construction and development it is admirable.

MR. BEERBOHM TREE'S article in the *North American Review* deals rather perfunctorily with "some aspects of the drama." He rightly stands up for the actor-manager, to whom "the bulk of artistic achievement given to the stage during our generation has been due." Mr. Tree admits that a manager who is not an actor may make an ideal head of a theatre, but he does not seem to recollect anyone who has actually done so.

FOR the benefit of Miss Rose Norreys, who is still in a state that gives all her friends anxiety and pain, Mrs. Jopling-Rowe is raffling the portrait she painted of the clever little actress some years ago for the Grosvenor Gallery. Anyone who cares to help in carrying out this kind thought,

and to purchase a chance of winning a charming picture as well, should apply for a half-guinea ticket to Mrs. Jopling-Rowe, 3, Pembroke-road, Kensington.

THE withdrawal of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, after its short and unsuccessful career, has once more revived the question as to the best means of protecting players against such ill-fortune as befalls them when, after rehearsing for weeks without salary, they find themselves out of an engagement after a few days' run. This piece was in rehearsal for six weeks, and was played in public for no more than nine nights. The case of the actors and actresses is hard enough in all conscience, but such misfortunes are certain to befall them as long as the present unsatisfactory state of things is allowed to continue.

NOT the least important and interesting section of the coming Victorian Era Exhibition at Earl's Court will be one designed to indicate the progress made in the arts of the stage during the last sixty years. In all respects, we need hardly say, that progress has been very marked. Models of theatres, pieces of scenery, dresses, portraits, playbills, autograph letters, and what not are to be used by way of illustration. Sir Henry Irving is the chairman of the hon. sub-committee, which is composed of Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Pinero, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, Mr. Tree, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Wilson Barrett, Mr. Comyns Carr, Mr. George Edwardes, Mr. Clement Scott, Mr. S. Gatti, Mr. Edward Terry, and Mr. G. R. Sims. The hon. secretary is Mr. Austin Brereton, than whom a better selection for the post could not have been made.

MR. CARSON, of the *Stage*, has been presented with a silver tea service and a silver cigar-box in acknowledgment of his energetic and successful efforts—already referred to in *The Theatre*—to bring down the railway rates and fares which touring companies have had to pay. In the enforced absence of Sir Henry Irving, the ceremony took place at the St. James's Theatre, Mr. George Alexander presiding.

MR. WHITEHEAD, of Vincent-square, has been commissioned by Lady Harris to execute a monument to the memory of her husband over his grave in Brompton cemetery. It will consist of a white marble pillar, surmounted by a life-size bust, on which Fame places a wreath of laurel. On one side is a trophy emblematic of Music and the Drama.

THE Playgoers' Club discussed the other day the question of organised opposition on first nights, a subject which has been attracting some attention of late. The general opinion was that no such opposition had to be feared, and that managers should use more tact and employ fewer policemen! Audiences were criticised as well as those who cater for them, and a futile request was addressed to all playgoers to preserve a judicial frame of mind, and to reserve their expressions of approval, or the reverse, until the fall of the curtain. Good advice, no doubt, but not very likely to bear much fruit.

MR. PENLEY will not, apparently, be seen in a new part for some little time. On the 6th inst., the Globe Theatre passes temporarily into the hands of Mr. J. L. Shine and Mr. D. Christie Murray, who will produce a play of their own writing, called *An Irish Gentleman*.

MISS EVELYN MILLARD is about to take a theatre on her own account, and may possibly be the new lessee of the Royalty, just vacated by Mr. George Alexander. She is anxious to produce Mr. Louis N. Parker's play, *The Mayflower*, and has also secured some other pieces for early production.

MR. ARTHUR ROBERTS'S next production, an adaptation of *La Poupée*, will have to be severely bowdlerised before it can be presented in London. In it Mr. Roberts will play a young monk who falls in love with a doll-maker's daughter, and is actually married to her, the other monks, who get up the ceremony for a joke, imagining that the girl is a cleverly-fashioned mechanical doll. The success of the piece in Paris was due to the remarkable manner in which the actress who played the doll-maker's child imitated the movements of a doll.

THE success of the wordless play at the Prince of Wales's Theatre leads to many rumours of other like enterprises, theatrical managers being always ready to follow like sheep in the wake of any popular entertainment. Mr. Charles Lauri has acquired the rights of a little piece of this nature now being given at the Folies-Bergères. It is called '*Chand d'Habits*, the French equivalent for our street cry of "Old Clo'," and tells the tale of a Pierrot who, having robbed and murdered an old clothes vendor, is haunted everywhere he goes by the voice of his victim crying out, as was his custom in life, "*Chand d'Habits*." The idea is dramatic, and has mightily pleased Paris audiences.

THE Archdeacon of Middlesex, the Venerable Dr. Thornton, is announced to read a paper before the Royal Literary Society on "The Drama of the 16th and 17th Centuries compared with the Fiction of the 19th Century." Such a comparison should afford interesting results, not so much to the advantage of the novel-writers as some modern critics would have us believe.

MR. RICHARD DAVEY, a valued contributor to *The Theatre*, lately read a paper on modern acting to a meeting of the Playgoers' Club at St. James's Hall. He pleaded for an institution amongst us like the French Conservatoire, though a little more up to date. The actor of the present time was too fond of society and of the club; he rarely thought of improving his artistic knowledge. In this he was unlike Mme. Bernhardt, who never passed a day without adding to the resources of her art. Having learnt to "walk on," the player thought he could do anything. The English stage might have better "society" actors than the French; they came from society, and knew how to behave themselves in a drawing-room. Sir Henry Irving was one of the players who were always learning. He had not had a university education, but could talk well on any subject.

AFTER a long illness, Mr. Agostino Gatti died on January 14, at his residence in Bedford-square. For nearly eighteen years he had been a prominent figure in theatrical life. He was born at Ticino, Switzerland, in or about 1841. With his brother Stefano, from whom he was almost inseparable to the last, he came to England at an early age, prospered as a restaurateur, and in 1879 became joint lessee of the Adelphi Theatre. Much good fortune attended the pair as managers, since, although foreigners, they could accurately gauge the tastes of a considerable section of the English playgoing public. Last year the brothers took the Vaudeville, there to produce *A Night Out*. Mr. Agostino Gatti was a Roman Catholic, and the church of Corpus Christi, Maiden-lane, will miss in him a liberal almsgiver.

OUR note about the two Ellalines (Miss Ellaline Terriss and Miss Ellaline Terry) has been echoed elsewhere, and it is suggested that the latter should, in order to avoid confusion, be known as Miss Beatrice Terry, Beatrice being the second prenom bestowed upon her by her

godfathers and godmothers in her baptism. Miss Terriss received the name at the suggestion of her godfather, the Governor of the Falkland Islands, where she was born; by him it was apparently invented, and a very pretty invention it was. Mr. Calmour thought so, and gave it both to the heroine of *The Amber Heart*, and, later on, to the little daughter of Mr. Charles Terry, whose godfather he is. So this was how it all came about.

To play the same part year in and year out for close upon a decade and a half must be a record—and not at all an enviable record either. It seems that a certain actor, Mr. E. J. George, has for the past fourteen years been taking continuously the part of Dan'l in *The Silver King*. It is a marvel how a man can perform such a feat and yet retain his sanity unimpaired.

IN consequence of the miscarriage of a proof, some misprints occurred in our last issue. On page 13, line 16, for “fell,” read “free;” lower down, for “1871,” read “1821;” on page 14, for “finedeth,” read “builddeth.”

YET another suburban theatre. This year, it is expected, a large hall adapted to the production of plays will be opened in the centre of the district comprising Hornsey, Crouch-end, and Stroud-green.

THACKERAY'S novels, as everybody knows, do not readily lend themselves to the purposes of the stage. Mr. W. G. Wills thought to make a play out of *Esmond*, but soon abandoned his task. Mr. Edgar Pemberton, however, has now undertaken such a task for Mr. Edward Compton.

M. HERVIEU'S *Loi de l'Homme* is in active rehearsal at the Comédie Française.

IN all probability, though it is not quite settled yet, the Comédie Française will send a company of its most distinguished members to perform *Œdipe Roi*, at Athens, during the celebrations which are to attend the centenary of the French School there. The Temple of Bacchus would be temporarily restored in wood for the purpose. Whether M. Mounet-Sully and his fellow players would appeal to an Athenian audience, who would not be able to understand a word they said, seems rather doubtful.

DIVERSE statements are current in Paris as to the character and aim of M. Sardou's new comedy, *Spiritisme*, to be produced very shortly at the Renaissance. In point of fact, he has long had a leaning towards spiritualism, and the new piece will afford a further proof of this. Here, by a curious fatality, he has had more than one predecessor, as in so many of his other themes. One of Leopold Maresco's plays—bearing, by the way, the same title—has a scene dealing with spiritualistic manifestations. Again, old frequenters of the Variétés, Paris, may remember *La Table Tournante* (1853)—“Expérience magnétique en un acte, avec couplets.”

IN spite of the Pope's taste for the drama, the bigotry which refused a full Christian burial to Molière is not yet extinct in Paris. Cardinal Richard, the Archbishop, has issued a letter prohibiting all priests, under pain of suspension, from going to a theatre in ecclesiastical costume.

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S tribute to Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, on the occasion of the banquet in her honour, has elicited a characteristic reply. “Dear and great artist,” she replied, “it has made me very happy. I thank you a thousand times. I place my two hands in yours.” One of

the congratulatory telegrams Mme. Bernhardt received was from the critics of New York.

M. COQUELIN cadet has done well at the Comédie Française as Poirier in Augier's play.

M. MAUREL has issued in Paris an interesting little book, *Concernant la Mise-en-Scène de Don Juan*. In this opera, it will be remembered, he has achieved one of his most conspicuous triumphs. He speaks of his laborious self-education for the chief part—an acceptable piece of autobiography—and of the traditions gathered about the work as to singing, stage-setting, and costume.

SIGNOR MASCAGNI's new opera is Japanese as far as the subject is concerned. It is called *Iris*, after the heroine, who will be impersonated in America by a lady with the curiously-sounding name of Madame Alma Dalma. The story is exceedingly lugubrious in its *dénouement*, though there are opportunities in the first two acts for plenty of brightness and sparkle in the music. The composer is delighted with the libretto, and declares that it is inspired with a flow of melody and many happy ideas.

THE stage has suffered an appreciable loss. Signor Alexander Salvini, the younger of the two sons of the great Italian tragedian, died at Monte Catini, near Florence, towards the end of December, having just completed his thirty-fifth year. His father wished him to be a civil engineer, but in 1881, during a visit to America, he became an actor by profession. "How dare you," Signor Salvini telegraphed, "do this without my permission?" "Because, sir," was the reply, "I knew that if I asked for it I should not get it." He supported Miss Clara Morris with success, and the father, after seeing his Romeo, wound up some severe criticism by saying, "Go on, my boy." Subsequently the youth joined his father's company in America, where he gradually obtained a firm footing as a representative of romantic characters. He married an American actress, Miss Maude Dixon, who nursed him tenderly to the end. In Paris he was always the guest of M. Coquelin the elder, and in this country of Madame Adelina Patti.

AN anecdote of Alexander Salvini in his boyhood is related by Miss Mildred Aldrich. He was entrusted in an amateur performance with a small part, a postman. But the lad who was to play a character about sixty years old fell ill of the measles, and the question of an understudy had not been considered. In this emergency little Sandro, but seven years old, said that he would play the part. His father frowned at him. Could he learn the lines? Young courage dauntlessly replied that he could. He went off to some childish sport, and nearly forgot all about it. The next morning the father sent for the child to go over his lines. Alas! he made such a botch of it that the actor, exasperated, flung the book at his head with unerring aim, and sent him howling from the room. He ran to his grandmother for consolation. The pride of the old actress was up. She coached him carefully, and when the next rehearsal came the father was amazed to find that the boy had not only conquered the lines but had a quaint notion of the character he was to undertake.

SIGNOR FERRANTI, the buffo, may not have been forgotten. Thirty years ago he was singing in *The Barber of Seville* with Parepa, Brignoli, and Susini, and even then was described as a "veteran." In 1879, as a member of a concert tour, he was remarkable for what one critic called his sprightliness. He has now passed away, not of old age, but in consequence of an accident.

It is not often that we hear of a ballet dancer appearing on the stage in mourning. Lately, while preparing to go on at Milan, Signora Ferrero received a telegram announcing the death of her brother, to whom she was much attached. In order to save the management from inconvenience she went through her task, at first in the white dress she had just donned, but afterwards in deep black. The news of her loss soon spread through the theatre, and she was received at the end, a French correspondent tells us, with "signes de profonde sympathie."

MADAME MODJESKA's season in New York was to begin on January 18.

MR. AUGUSTIN DALY's next production at his theatre is a new comedy by Mr. Robert Chambers, based upon his romantic novel of *A King and a Few Dukes*. Miss Ada Rehan, Mr. Charles Richman, Miss Virginia Earle, and Mr. Edwin Stevens will be in the cast.

MR. JEFFERSON, lately in New York, will spend the rest of the winter at his place in Louisiana.

MR. DALY has telegraphed to M. Sarcey that he intends to produce in New York and London this year a version of M. Joseph Fabre's *Jeanne Darc*, with Miss Rehan as the heroine.

MME. BONAPLATA-BAU has left America for Europe. On the eve of her departure a curious incident occurred at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Mme. Litvinne one day thought herself too ill to appear to play Aida. The management had recourse to Mme. Bonaplata-Bau, who consented to fill the vacant place. Mme. Litvinne suddenly recovered, and Mme. Bonaplata-Bau, passing over the slight she had received, applauded the performance of her rival from a private box.

THE protectionist crusade initiated by the New York *Musical Age* for the better encouragement of the American composer and the American musician continues to be a subject of controversy all over the States. In one quarter the establishment of a great national college of music is suggested, as in that case it would be "only a question of time when the hundreds of thousands of dollars now expended on foreigners, to the exclusion of the home artists, would then remain in this country." For a time, however, things must remain very much as they are. Fashion has taken the much-detested foreigner under her wing. Moreover, as we have already remarked, the question is really one of demand and supply. If America could produce many composers, and singers, and pianists of the first rank, she would have less cause to complain of intrusions from abroad.

It is certainly to be regretted that so fine a singer as Mme. Nordica should find herself ousted from the Metropolitan Opera House company this season by the foreigner. "This," she is reported to have said to a representative of the *New York Sun*, "is my own country. I have made my progress before my own people. They have seen me rise here, and it is doubly painful to me that they should see me in my present position."

IN England there is no such cry as that raised by the *Musical Age*. Mme. Nordica, in common with all competent American artists, can always rely upon a warm welcome here. If we may repeat so stale a truism, art has no nationality.

LOOKING at New York entertainments generally, the *Musical Age* finds matter for sad reflection. "The public," it wails, "appears to demand foreign talent, foreign plays, foreign artists, and foreign productions. It is even willing to support mediocre talent simply because the artists and

the plays are foreign." For ourselves, we should be sorry to invest a single shilling in mediocrity, as far as New York and the other great cities in the States are concerned. Only conspicuous ability can be expected to do much with American audiences.

GRAND Opera cannot always stand upon its own legs in the United States. The Rev. Dr. Eaton, of New York, puts forth a plea for it in the *World*. "An amusement engineered by 'Wall-street managers,'" he says, "must be lifted into a noble vocation, like the gallery and library. To accomplish its true mission, the Opera must not depend upon the 'rigid ministrations of fashion,' but must be put within the reach of students and music lovers of moderate means. To do all this Opera should be endowed in America. Germany and France build Opera houses and grant subsidies. Our institutions make such action impossible. Would some millionaire make himself famous, and do an incalculable service to the higher culture of his nation? Here is a great opportunity." But will that opportunity be seized?

MISS ROSE COGHLAN, the original Lady Marsden in *All for Her*, thinks of reappearing in London, from which she has been absent all too long.

MR. MARION CRAWFORD, in conjunction with Mr. St. Maur, is dramatising *Dr. Claudius* for the First Avenue Theatre, New York.

FRESH legislation against dramatic piracy in America has been passed by the Congress.

MR. J. E. DODSON hopes to return to England for a few weeks next summer. In his quietly insidious way, he has introduced solo-whist at the Lotos Club, where it proves exceptionally popular.

FIRST-NIGHT criticism is again on its trial in America. According to one view, it always fails to recognise and allow for the physical condition of the artist, and in this respect, as in others, is distinctly unjust. Of course, as the *Boston Journal* remarks, the critic ought really to know what that physical condition is—whether the player is suffering from a sluggish liver, indigestion, headache, or any of the ills that flesh is heir to. Many a performance has been spoilt by the consumption of a Welsh rarebit on the previous night, and no critic who is worth his salt should fail to ascertain whether the player has been guilty of such an indiscretion.

THE historic old Front-street Theatre, Baltimore, is to be sold. Here Junius Brutus Booth made his first appearance in America, and here, too, Jenny Lind sang to enormous audiences in 1850.

MRS. POTTER and Mr. Kyrle Bellew have had a singularly successful tour in New South Wales and Queensland.

MR. GEORGE RIGNOLD has reappeared at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, in *Henry V.*

"THE THEATRE," MARCH, 1897.



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MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER

As ORLANDO.

THE THEATRE.

MARCH, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

HISTORY ON THE STAGE.



UGHT historical personages to be put upon the stage, and, if so, under what restrictions, if any? These questions have suggested themselves inevitably in connection with the production of *Nelson's Enchantress* at the Avenue Theatre. Apart altogether from its literary or dramatic merit, that play has aroused a good deal of opposition. We do not refer only to the well-intentioned but foolish naval officer who "interpellated" on the subject in the House of Commons; we refer to the many cultured and thoughtful people who have protested either against any theatrical treatment of historic figures, or against any treatment other than the purely and strictly historical. Some have thought that Nelson is at present too near to us in point of time to be a suitable subject for dramatisation; others have objected to his being portrayed solely as an illicit lover, his work as a naval commander being kept in the background; while others have resented the white-washing of Lady Hamilton—the attempt to represent her as a well-meaning, meek, ill-treated woman, whose influence over our "heroic sailor-soul" was only for his good and that of his country.

It is obviously undesirable that history should be falsified in the theatre—or anywhere else. In those cases where we feel sure about the character of famous persons, we ought not to fly in the face of our own knowledge; and in those instances in which there is room for doubt, we ought not, consistently with our duty to the dead, to accept and perpetuate the less kindly, the more damning, theory. Seeing that there is no absolute certainty that the sons of Edward IV. were killed by the Duke of Gloucester's orders, it is regrettable that Shakspeare should have adopted the legend that he did kill them, and should have handed

his portrait of Richard down to posterity painted in colours unjustifiably lurid. Of course, we know why it was necessary, under the rule of Elizabeth, to vilify Richard III.; but one is sorry for the necessity nevertheless, and especially sorry that Shakspeare was unable to dwell both upon the sagacity and upon the popularity of the real Gloucester. In the same way, one regrets that the exigencies of the theatre compelled Mr. Wills to portray Cromwell as a vulgar, self-seeking hypocrite, willing to accept bribes if they were offered.

Similarly one may deplore that Tennyson, in common with certain predecessors, gave added reality and permanence to the story of Fair Rosamond—though, in this case, not much harm is done to the cause of historical truth. If there was no Fair Rosamond, there was probably someone in an analagous position towards Henry; and, any way, Tennyson uses her, with some skill, as a means of exhibiting the more tender and sympathetic side of Becket's character. There is nothing in *Becket* obviously or deliberately false to history. Venial, again, is the fault of those dramatists, British and foreign, who, in plays on the subject of Mary Stuart, represent her as having a memorable interview with Elizabeth. Although no such interview may be on record, no one can say that it did not take place; and in making the two Queens meet, therefore, the playwright may be pardoned. Very different is the spirit in which we are bound to regard Dumas' dealing with the life and character of Edmund Kean. Anything more grotesque than Dumas' drama on this topic it is difficult to conceive; the ignorance of facts shown in it is colossal. In this work the dramatist did not content himself simply with inventing within reasonable limits; he imagined and depicted things which not only never did occur, but could never have occurred by any possibility. He went out of his way, in fact, to be preposterous, and in adapting the play to the English stage our native playmakers have had their work cut out for them.

All historical plays, however, are not open to this objection. To take our English drama first, there is the inevitable reference to the two Shakspearean series—the English and the Roman. *Richard III.* may be the outcome of courtly subservience, unwilling to admit that the rival of Richmond could have a redeeming virtue; but consider the general justice and exactitude of *Richard II.* and the four "Henry" plays (counting in *Henry VIII.*). Shakspeare, probably, did not bother himself in the matter, being content to follow the old chroniclers even in details; but he contrived, nevertheless, to impart remarkable *vraisemblance* to his work, most of his portraits being lifelike in their accuracy.

Pity it is that there is so little, outside of Shakspeare, on which the English historical dramatists can properly plume themselves. There have been many English plays on the subject of Alfred and Henry II. ; but not one of them, save *Becket*, has survived—not even the *Alfred the Great* of Mr. Martin Tupper. The *Edward II.* of Christopher Marlowe and the *Perkin Warbeck* of John Ford exist only in the library. Charles I. would probably be dead to the stage but for the fascinating embodiment by the Lyceum chief. Charles II. has figured in several dramas, but never very conspicuously ; though one would have thought his personality would have been found captivating. He was seen on the London stage, more or less lately, in *The Royal Oak* ; but as a stage hero he has never made a marked impression.

To leave Shakspeare out of the question, the French have done better in the direction of the historical drama than have we. The Germans can boast, very rightly, of the Wallenstein trilogy by Schiller, to whom we owe, also not only a *Joan of Arc*, but a *Mary Stuart*, which has been adapted to our boards. The French, however, have a keener eye than the Germans for the picturesque, in history as in other things, and the result has been that in the first half of the present century the historical drama has flourished in France with considerable brilliancy. The national story was ably illustrated in the *Henri III.* of Dumas, the *Jeunesse de Henri V.* of Duval, the *Louis XI.* of Delavigne, the *Marion Delorme* of Hugo, and the *Charlotte Corday* of Ponsard. Of these the *Louis XI.* has been made very familiar to English and American audiences by Charles Kean and Sir Henry Irving, while the *Charlotte Corday*, adapted by Mr. Kyrle Bellew, has been seen by our American cousins, and may by-and-bye be seen by us. Outside of French history we have the *Caligula* and the *Antony* of Dumas, and the *Cléopâtre* of Mme. de Girardin ; we have the *Lucrèce Borgia* and *Marie Tudor* of Hugo, the *Marie Stuart* of Lebrun, the *Cromwell* of Hugo (who now remembers the *Cromwell* of Colonel A. B. Richards?), and the *Chatterton* of De Vigny. This is a better show than we islanders can make—outside, as we say, of Shakspeare—though we have various historical dramas in verse (such as the *Philip Van Artevelde* of Sir Henry Taylor), which, simply as poetry apart from drama, take a high and fixed place in literature.

On the whole, it may be said that there is not so very much to condemn in the theatrical presentment of historic facts and figures. It is not often that, as in *Nelson's Enchantress*, a writer deliberately sets to work to ignore the worst side of a hero's or heroine's personality. The modern tendency is to build

upon a solid basis of truth, so far as that difficult quality can be discovered amid the mass of documentary and printed evidence. Of late years Sardou has constructed a very life-like Theodora, and a Napoleon, admirably true to biographic record. Even Mr. Wills did not go so very far wrong with his Napoleon in *A Royal Divorce*. Of course the exigencies of the stage do not permit of great subtlety of characterisation, except where, as in *Louis XI.*, Lord Lytton's *Richelieu*, Tennyson's *Becket*, and Wills's *Charles I.*, the title character dominates the play. Of these four dramas it may fairly be said that the Becket, the Louis, the Charles, and the Richelieu of the stage are also, as near as may be, the Becket, Louis, Charles, and Richelieu of history. The portraits here painted have minuteness as well as breadth; they are founded on fact, so far as we know it. And even where there is breadth only, without detail, the effect created is often quite legitimate. A few bold touches may suffice to produce a defensible picture of a historical worthy. Tom Taylor, not very successful with his *Joan of Arc*, whom he made dull, was certainly very happy in his Kit-Kat of William III. in *Lady Clancarty*. No doubt he was helped by the actor who "created" the part, but he gave the actor his opportunity.

Probably more will be done in the future than has been achieved in the past in the way of consummating our English historical drama. One could wish that the public of to-day might be instructed in the facts and figures of history as was the public of the Elizabethan and Jacobian era. A delightful school in which to learn must that have been over which Shakspeare wielded his magical and charming ferule. Some day, perhaps, the State may be sufficiently enlightened to subsidise a theatre in which the drama of the national history shall be submitted to the lieges with all possible completeness and perfection. Meanwhile, it is to be feared, we must continue to depend upon the energy and enterprise of individual *entrepreneurs*, who are content to do at their own risk what ought to be done by the community for itself. It is from them, so far, that dramatists have received encouragement to explore the archives of their country's annals, and seek for objects suitable for dramatic treatment. Possibly our managers may be able to select from the literature of the unacted poetic drama material for stage presentment. The *Harold* of Lord Tennyson, for example, remains unperformed. His *Queen Mary* is ripe for revival. Any way, there is, it is clear, a future for History on the Stage. There is a taste and a demand for it, and there is plenty of histrionic and other artistic ability to devote to its service.

"THE THEATRE," MARCH, 1897.



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MR. WILSON BARRETT & MISS JEFFRIES
IN THE DAUGHTERS OF BABYLON.

Portraits.

MR. ALEXANDER, MR. BARRETT, AND MISS JEFFRIES.

THERE has never been an Orlando yet who in the later scenes of Shakspeare's most delightful example of "pastoral comical," to adopt the phrase of old Polonius, was not overshadowed by his Rosalind, granting that she possessed enough talent to carry through the sparkling scenes with humour and vivacity. It is the earlier portions of the play that put the actor to the test, and here it is that Mr. Alexander comes out so well. In the hands of a player less well-graced the scenes with Adam might go for very little. Mr. Alexander, if not without grave defects, strikes exactly the right note. The boyish discontent of the opening, the tenderness of that passage, all too short, where Adam is cheered on to a final effort by the encouraging words of his young master, the sarcastic politeness with which Orlando puts to rout the uncivil Jaques—these, brief as they be, are some of the most delightful moments in the play. Good, too, are the scenes that show us the love at first sight of the brave, unfortunate youth and the fair, unfortunate maid—unfortunate but for the moment in the loss of worldly goods and courtly favour; happy for all time as a pair of the most idyllic sweethearts the time-worn earth has known. It is at the moment when Orlando, struck dumb by the sudden dart of love, gazes speechless after the unreadily departing Rosalind, that our portrait is taken.

"What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?

I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference,"

he cries, adding, with a half-sorrowful, half-joyous pang at heart,

"O poor Orlando! thou art overthrown."

And then comes in the good-hearted fop Le Beau to speed him "from the smoke into the smother," and we are soon in the heart of the forest, where Miss Julia Neilson has *her* chance, and so well avails herself of it.

Of Mr. Wilson Barrett and Miss Maud Jeffries we spoke so recently in these pages, when their portraits in *The Sign of the Cross* appeared a year ago, that it is needful to say but little of the photograph which shows them in *The Daughters of Babylon*. What remarks we have to make upon this production will be found elsewhere in the present number. All we will do here is to offer Mr. Barrett our congratulations on the reception it met with, and upon the fact that he has so completely won back the position he held aforesaid as one of the first favourites of a very large section of London playgoers.

The Round Table.

NAPOLÉON AND THE STAGE.

BY FRANCIS ORMATHWAITE.

IT is now announced that *Madame Sans-Gêne*, with Sir Henry Irving as Napoleon and Miss Ellen Terry as the heroine, is on the point of being produced at the Lyceum Theatre. The event will remind many of a marked deficiency in dramatic literature. No adequate attempt has yet been made to provide the stage with a striking portrait of the master spirit Englishmen had to confront a century ago. Only a Shakspeare or a Corneille, it has seemed to be thought, could hope to do justice to Napoleon's immense force of intellect and character—his almost unique genius as a warrior, a statesman, and a diplomatist, coupled with a no less conspicuous hardness of heart and contempt for moral obligation in the pursuit of an ambition well-nigh insatiable. *Madame Sans-Gêne*, one of the best of M. Sardou's works, conveys little more than a subtle suggestion of all this. It deals with the Napoleon of private rather than public life. Opportunely enough, Sir Henry Irving's production of the play is preceded by the publication of a little book which, based upon original research, affords us many a clear glimpse of the man. *Napoleon's Opera-Glass*, as it is quaintly called by its author, Mr. Lew Rosen, deals exclusively with his attitude towards the drama. He felt its charm, made friends among its votaries, and criticised its interpretation. He recognised its influence to the extent of putting it, like all literature, under the severest restrictions. He was himself an accomplished actor, as the artificial effects he achieved in public on all important occasions was sufficient to prove. In fact, he was always playing a part.

Napoleon's taste for the stage appears to have begun in 1788, when, a penniless artillery officer, he settled in Paris to seek his fortune. Not long afterwards he saw Madame Saint Hubert, in *Didon*, Gluck's opera, and addressed to her a high-flown madrigal. He studied the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine and Voltaire with the avidity he had previously shown for the *Contrat Social*. For the first-named he felt an

admiration which lasted to the end. "Corneille," he used to say in years to come, "is a statesman. He understands politics. If he were still living, I would make him a prince." Molière failed to please him, chiefly on account of an imperfect sense of humour. Of Shakspeare he had a still lower opinion. "For two hundred years," he said, "this man was steeped in oblivion, even in England. Suddenly it pleased Voltaire, who lived at Geneva, and saw many Englishmen, to praise that author in order to ingratiate himself with them. The word went round that Shakspeare was the foremost writer of the world. I have read him. There is nothing in him that can touch Corneille or Racine. It is impossible to read one of his plays. They are pitiable." Literary history, it is certain, was not one of Napoleon's strong points. Shakspeare can hardly be said to have been "steeped in oblivion" for anything like two centuries, and was praised by Voltaire nearly twenty years before the latter settled in or near Geneva.

In the early days of the Revolution, still waiting for his chance, Napoleon made the acquaintance of Talma, who, though young, had made himself famous by his impersonation of Charles IX. in Chénier's tragedy. Their first meeting took place in the green-room of the Théâtre Français. Napoleon at this time was so poor that, according to familiar stories, he often dined at the tragedian's expense, and would have drowned himself in the Seine but for an accidental meeting on the Pont Neuf with a helpful schoolfellow from Brienne. "I fought like a lion for the Republic," he wrote to Talma after Toulon, "and as a reward she allows me to starve. . . . I am at the end of my resources. . . . You are fortunate. Your reputation depends upon no one. Two hours passed upon the boards puts you before the public, which showers glory upon you. We soldiers must buy it on a stage more spacious, and they don't always permit us to get upon the stage. . . . I am down to my last penny. Have you any ducats that you can spare me? I will not refuse them, and will reimburse you from the first kingdom I shall conquer with my sword. My friend, the heroes of Aristotle were lucky fellows. They were not dependent upon a Minister of War. Adieu." There is no good reason to suppose that this letter is apocryphal, as some have asserted. Like Marshal Saxe, Napoleon understood the importance, in certain circumstances, of amusing the forces of which he gained command. He wrote to Chaptal from Egypt for a company of actors. "The state of prosperity in which the army of the East finds itself, and its idleness in the great city of Cairo, renders this matter, which at first sight may appear trivial, necessary even

from a political point of view. A sufficient number of artists might be found at Marseilles and Toulon. . . . I should not regret spending 40,000 francs in this affair." . . . "It would be well," he told the head of the Navy, "to add some ballet girls." Talma volunteered to accompany his rising and no longer impecunious friend to Egypt. "No," replied Napoleon, "you must not commit such an act of folly. You have a brilliant course before you. Leave fighting to those who are unable to do anything better."

Elevated to supreme power in the state, Napoleon took care to make the influence of the drama, as of books and journalism, entirely subservient to his interests. He could not fail to see that it was an important means of forming opinion. No play could be produced in the theatres without undergoing a rigorous supervision. He thought that epochs so recent as that of Henri IV. should not be illustrated on the stage, as they might arouse popular passions. He suppressed Jouy's *Bélisaire* because it might remind the audience of an exiled general. He was prepared to send offending actors to San Domingo itself, and would have done so in one instance but for the interposition of Joséphine. Prosperity did not dry up the little kindness of nature he possessed. When his old friend became Emperor, Talma modestly kept away from the palace. Napoleon was quick to notice the fact. "His imperial majesty," ran a note to the actor from the first chamberlain a day or two later, "has felt much surprise at not receiving M. Talma's personal congratulations. It appears as though he intended to withdraw himself from the Emperor, which is far from his majesty's wish. M. Talma is hereby invited to present himself at the Tuileries as soon as he finds it convenient." It is needless to say that the invitation was accepted. Châteaubriand used to say that Talma taught Napoleon how to act majesty—how to sit upon a throne. "That," said the Emperor, "is a compliment; it shows at least that I must have played my part well." For Talma, indeed, he seems ever to have had the keenest admiration. "Fontanes," he said, after a representation by the tragedian of Nero in *Britannicus*, "I hope you are satisfied?" "Sire, I have seen Le Kain." "There you are again; always praising the ancients." "Sire, I abandon Cæsar and Alexander to your majesty, but pray leave me Le Kain." Napoleon's admiration of Talma was not uncritical. "Your acting as Nero," he said, "does not make sufficiently clear the struggle going on between a depraved nature and a good education. I should also like it if you were to make fewer gestures. Such a nature as Nero's is not expansive, but self-concentrated. On the other

hand, I cannot sufficiently praise the simple and natural form to which you have reduced tragedy. Come to think of it, men in authority, whether they owe it to birth or talent, whether they are agitated by passion or lost in deep thought, may speak in a higher key than usual, but for all that should speak in a natural manner. At this very moment, for instance, we are speaking in a conversational tone, and yet we are making history." Nor did Talma's Cæsar in *La Mort de Pompée* entirely please him. "You fail," he said, "to grasp your part. You seem convinced when you pronounce the line—

"Pour moi qui tiens le trône égal à l'infamie."

Cæsar did not believe a word of what he said. He spoke in that way only because he was surrounded by Romans, whom it was necessary to persuade that he had a horror of the throne. But he was himself far from believing that the throne, already the object of his full ambition, was such a detestable thing. You must not make him talk as though he meant what he said." Talma acted upon the advice. "Excellent," said Napoleon; "I now recognise Cæsar." The master also looked after the opera and the ballet. "Everyone," he once wrote, "complains of the administration of operatic affairs by M. de Lucay. If these imbroglions do not stop, I shall put a good military man in charge, who will see to it that matters march in the time of the drum beat." Now and then the usually stern mouth would put on a genial smile. "Ah," he said, riding up to Mlle. Mars at a review, "I see you are returning us the visits we are so pleased to pay you at the Français." He summoned a party of the old Comédiens du Roi to Dresden, assuring their leader, Talma, that they should play before a "fine parterre of kings." Even while abroad Napoleon did not neglect theatrical affairs in Paris. "I charge you exclusively," he wrote to Cambacérès, "with the surveillance of the opéra until my return. I do not wish to hear any more about their troubles. Establish severe discipline; have authority respected." During the flames of Moscow, it is usually assumed, he found time to "draw up" a new series of regulations as to the Comédie Française. In point of fact, the "Moscow decree," which to a large extent remains in force to the present day, was simply a matter of theatrical effect. Long previously prepared and signed, it had been sent after the Emperor to Russia, and was returned with instructions that it should be dated from that country.

European independence presently reasserted itself; the Empire sank in ruin, and Napoleon became an exile in the lonely island of St. Helena. To the end he spoke with something like affection of the great actor who had befriended him in his poverty, who

had been his trusted counsellor in many a state function, and to whom he was indebted for a thousand hours of intellectual enjoyment. "I should have decorated him," he told Las Cases, "but for the fear of an outcry on the part of popular prejudice." Again: "he is the truest actor to nature that ever trod the boards." Talma, on his side, never failed to do homage, even under the Restoration, to his fallen master. Some months after Napoleon's death he appeared as Sylla in Jouy's tragedy. In the words of one chronicler, he "determined to recall the living image of his early friend and subsequent patron by the closest resemblance which art could enable him to present. He dressed his hair exactly after the style of the deceased Emperor, and his dictatorial wreath was an exact fac-simile of the laurel diadem in gold with which Napoleon was crowned at Nôtre Dame. The intended identity was recognised at once; and when, in the last scene, he descended majestically from his place, and laying down the coronet, pronounced the line—

'J'ai gouverné sans peur, et j'abdique sans crainte,'

the whole audience imagined that they saw the embodied spirit of Napoleon standing in awful majesty before them, and demanding their judgment on his actions. The effect upon such an excitable public may be easily conceived." The king was troubled, but contented himself with requesting the tragedian to adopt a different sort of head-dress.

OPERA IN ENGLAND.

BY JOSEPH BENNETT.

WE have lately had the Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company in London for three weeks, during which time some good performances were given, and a certain number of them enjoyed a fair share of public support. My present purpose is not to criticise the representations at the Garrick Theatre, but to remind amateurs that they were the first given in the metropolis since Covent Garden closed its doors at the end of last season. Not that calling this to mind will make the slightest impression. We are all accustomed to long terms of rest on the lyric stage, which, like the hare in the fable, runs for a minute and sleeps for an hour. But suppose we try to conceive the feeling of a Continental amateur on being told that the Carl Rosa people came to London at a time when opera had been silent for six months? Unless acquainted with the peculiar condition of things existing here, he would probably begin with incredulity. The word "impossible" would leap to his lips. A city of five millions without opera for six months! Nay, nay, it cannot be!

But if assured that it can be, and has very often been, our Continental friend could hardly fail to draw a lively picture of this panting metropolis, hungry and thirsty for opera, counting the days till the Royal Carl Rosa players should come, and going out to meet them with gladness and rejoicing. It would be needful to disabuse his mind—to tell him that the company, melted into the mass of London unobserved, scarcely rippled the surface of society during their stay, and departed with as little effect upon indifference as they came. Convinced of this, our German or French friend would shrug his shoulders, put it all down to insular eccentricity, and dismiss the matter as beyond the range of comprehension.

We ourselves might feel somewhat bewildered if it were possible for us to throw off the deadening influence of use and wont. "Use," says the proverb, "is second nature," and we look upon dearth of opera, because accustomed to it, as in some sort an ordination of providence. In like manner do we accept winter fogs and the east winds of spring; but with this difference—we grumble at the weather; to the opera we are supremely indifferent. Perhaps the reader exclaims, "Oh, come now! We are not quite so bad as that." Of course, there are exceptions in this huge cosmopolis, but if any sceptic will take the trouble to run through the history of Opera in England he will find that for generations past we have inherited indifference to the lyric stage. The course of that institution from the time of Handel to our own day is strewn with wrecks of enterprise and endeavour. Has not the office of an *impresario* often been a lobby of the Bankruptcy Court? So Handel found it, and he has had not a few successors. In fact, the story of opera is a deadly uniformity of failure, relieved only here and there by a gleam of success due to special circumstances.

But the musical drama struggles on, you say. So it does, and it may be instructive to ask what sort of life keeps it going, and how existence is supported. In London, the "Garden" opens its doors for nine or ten weeks in the height of the season because Society (with a capital S) likes a pleasant rendezvous where its members can inspect each other in gross and in detail, and feel stimulated to unwonted conversational vivacity by the sound of music. For Society to have an opera house is quite the correct thing; it is willing to pay for the luxury, and does not object to other people making earnest use of that with which it trifles. But do not let us deceive ourselves into belief that Society opera stands upon a basis of art. In this country it is a mere creature of fashion, and at the whim of fashion it would go down like a house of cards before one of those baby earthquakes

which, a seismic authority has told us, haunt the valley of the Severn. Meanwhile, in the provinces, the Carl Rosa company can scarcely make two ends meet. It has almost a monopoly of the big towns outside London; it gives good performances; its operas are well put on; yet the result is as just stated. If this be true, is it not a pity? The real question, however, must be less one of pitifulness than of causation and amendment.

As to causation, are we English constitutionally disqualified for opera by lack of the imaginativeness to which music-drama appeals? Here is a query which goes to the root of the matter, if the root be anywhere in ourselves. As a query it can no doubt be argued on both sides with considerable plausibility. On the one hand we may consider the fact that drama, apart from music, flourishes in our midst, and that no nation spends so much money upon music, apart from the drama, as our own. Yet the compound is practically rejected. Why? I have known it argued that, being deficient in imagination, we are offended by the unrealism of opera—by the pure artificiality of the thing. We demand realism, and are gratified when the stage shows us a hansom cab from the street, or a practicable pump. But when a tenor stabs himself and sings for fifteen minutes before dying, though he sing and act like Mario in his prime, we scoff, or indulge in a superior smile, or ask, with ineffable sarcasm, why nobody thought of running for a surgeon. There is no question, to my mind, that a real operatic taste is largely wanting amongst us. We do not look at that highly complicated and essentially unreal form of entertainment from the right point of view. It is among entertainments what *Alice in Wonderland* is among works of fiction; and as the book should be read with the simplicity of a child, the lyric drama should be received with no object but the enjoyment of its art. Wagner, whatever the faults of his system, has certainly done good service with his mythic and, from the realist's point of view, impossible plays. Even his bitterest opponent must recognise "a soul of goodness in things evil" when he considers the true educational value of Fafner, the singing dragon.

Minor points suggest themselves. For example: Is it true, as some say, that opera is kept at death's door by the exactions of those who are its ministers? I wish it were possible to reply with a confident negative; but that may not be. Artists of high value on the lyric stage are so few as to be masters of the situation, and it is not now a question what the manager can afford to give as what they will consent to take. I am sorry to recognise such scant signs of reasonable consideration, either for the *impresario* or the art. A wild rivalry exists among them in

the matter of salary, by the amount of which they fancy themselves judged, and to considerations of material gain everything higher and nobler must give place. One result is that opera of the best kind cannot be placed within reach of the people; while the people, on their part, wanting in real taste and caring chiefly for "stars" who have become famous, are prepared to turn with indifference from a cheaper stage which has no "stars" to show.

Again, is there any form of opera, other than that now in vogue, which gives better promise of success with the public? This question bristles with difficulties which would take long to surmount. It may be, however, that a reply is indicated by the success frequently, of late years, attendant upon works constructed after the model of French *opéra comique*. This was practically the form which Handel found flourishing in England when he came to establish Italian opera, and it is one that, given a good story, bright dialogue, and charming music, always stands a chance of success. It seems to me that, in lyric drama for the people, we must go back to greater simplicity and directness. The ship is staggering under too heavy a load, and there may be safety in jettisoning a part of the cargo. Already "Young Italy" has reduced the number of acts, and, though with an unnecessary amount of noise, has set the example of telling a short, compact story in a direct and easily intelligible manner. Against this may, no doubt, be set the favour shown to the vast fabrics upon which Wagner expended so much ingenuity and skill. Wagner, however, is a fashion at the moment, and fashions are even less to be counted on than comets. He and his creations will find their proper place in due time, but the larger place, I fancy, will belong to a simpler form, to more human stories, and to music that refreshes amid the labour and excitement of modern life. The wish may be the father to this thought, and I am driven to say, in conclusion, that the outlook of the lyric stage is confused and vague. About its present condition there can be no doubt at all. It can hardly change for the worse; it cannot stand still, for no human institution does that, and movement may be for the better. Let us hope for as fortunate a drift as that of the *Fram* through the Polar Sea.

PRETTY FANNY'S WAYS.

(A SEQUEL TO *JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN*.)

BY MALCOLM WATSON.

SCENE: *An elegantly furnished room in Mrs. Fanny Wilton's villa at Nice. At the back, French windows, open, and*

affording view of a bright flower-bedecked garden. On the left is a door leading from the hall. On the right, an escritoire, at which Frida Foldal is discovered writing. It is morning. A moment after the rising of the curtain Fanny Wilton enters from garden. Her manner betrays that she is in an irritable mood.

MRS. WILTON: What are you doing, child?

FRIDA (*looking up*): Writing to father. You know I had a letter from him this morning.

MRS. WILTON (*throwing herself languidly on sofa*): Oh yes. How is the old bo— I mean, gentleman?

FRIDA: Almost well again. His ankle gives him little or no pain now.

MRS. WILTON: Dear me! I suppose it never occurred to him that he nearly upset the sledge that night by his stupidity?

FRIDA (*taking up letter*): Father hopes you will excuse his awkwardness. But he really couldn't forego the honour of being run over by a splendid covered sledge with silver bells on the harness——

MRS. WILTON: No doubt. The lower classes are always so inconsiderate.

FRIDA: Just fancy! During his illness he completed a new poetical drama in five acts. He thinks very highly of it.

MRS. WILTON: I dare say. (*Picks up French novel—only, however, to throw it down again.*) I'm not interested in the poetical drama. Where's Erhart?

FRIDA: I thought he was with you.

MRS. WILTON (*glancing suspiciously at her*): Indeed! while I imagined I might find him here.

FRIDA (*thoughtfully, and rising and going to her*): You don't seem quite yourself to-day, Fanny. Would you like me to play the "Danse Macabre" to you? It always had a soothing effect upon poor John Gabriel.

MRS. WILTON: For pity's sake, spare me that! (*Turning fiercely upon the girl*) Look here. It's time we dropped this hideous mockery. What are you up to?

FRIDA: Up to? I don't understand the phrase.

MRS. WILTON (*laughing hysterically*): Pretty innocent! I suppose you'll tell me next you don't understand the meaning of "love."

FRIDA (*artlessly*): If you refer to "soul-love" as opposed to that other compound word "love-life," every Norwegian board-school girl is taught the significance of the expression.

MRS. WILTON: Ha! They know something in Norway.

(*Seizing Frida viciously by the wrist*) You fancy you can lure Erhart away from me. But I won't have it. I won't have it!

FRIDA (*shrinking back*): Please don't, Mrs. Wilton; it hurts.

MRS. WILTON: I intended it should. (*With self-control*) There are forces in human life that you seem to know very little about.

FRIDA: Of course there are. I dare say some could be named with which even you are imperfectly acquainted. But surely you didn't bring me to Nice to tell me that.

MRS. WILTON (*with silent laughter*): Oh, dear me, no; I didn't bring you to Nice to tell you that. I had quite another reason.

FRIDA: What was it?

MRS. WILTON (*very intense*): I wanted some one to fall back upon.

FRIDA: To fall back upon?

MRS. WILTON: That was the idea. Some one nice and soft and round. I thought I might grow tired of Erhart, and that in such an event you'd come in useful. But now the shoe's on the other foot. He's found out that I'm growing old! Oh, it's a horrible thing to grow old. And all day long you, with your baby face and innocent big eyes, sit there mocking me and saying, as plain as looks can say, "He's falling back on me; he's falling back on me!"

[*She throws herself upon the sofa, beating the cushions with her hands and sobbing convulsively. Gradually the paroxysm of passion passes and she becomes calmer. At this moment ERHART enters from the garden. He seems ill at ease.*]

ERHART: Is anything wrong? The atmosphere of the room strikes me as singularly airless.

MRS. WILTON: And yet the window is open.

ERHART: So I observed on entering. Good morning, Frida. Any news from home?

FRIDA: Father has just completed a new poetical drama in five acts——

ERHART (*hastily*): Yes, yes! But haven't you anything agreeable to tell us?

FRIDA: He says your Aunt Ella has returned home.

ERHART: I thought mother and she wouldn't get on together for long. They're both much too good. And Aunt Ella has such a patronising manner.

MRS. WILTON: She wanted to take you away from me.

ERHART (*hesitatingly*): Exactly.

MRS. WILTON: Perhaps you fancy now it was a pity she didn't succeed.

ERHART (*wearily*): Oh, for goodness' sake, Fanny, don't begin that all over again.

MRS. WILTON: But I must begin it again, and go on with it, and bring it, if need be, to a final conclusion.

ERHART (*seating himself doggedly*): Well, if you must, you must. But don't you think it better that Frida should leave the room?

MRS. WILTON: No; I wish her to remain.

FRIDA (*to ERHART*): If you like I can play the "Danse Macabre," and then I shan't hear anything you say.

ERHART (*hurriedly*): No, no—anything rather than that.

MRS. WILTON: Where were you last night?

[*He looks appealingly from one to the other.* MRS. WILTON *stamps her foot impatiently.*]

ERHART: Where was I? At Monte Carlo.

MRS. WILTON: Gambling?

ERHART: Only a little flutter, Fanny.

MRS. WILTON: How much did you take with you?

ERHART: Five hundred francs.

MRS. WILTON: And what have you brought back?

ERHART: Three.

MRS. WILTON: Three out of five hundred!

ERHART: The inexorable Law of Change, Fanny. It really wasn't my fault.

MRS. WILTON (*contemptuously*): Not your fault!

ERHART (*with a sudden glow*): Well, what would you have? I am young! I want to live, for once in my own way, as well as other people! I want to live my own life!

MRS. WILTON: And in doing so to spend other people's money!

ERHART: That's not nice of you, Fanny. To earn money one must work. But the young should never be called upon to work. The knowledge of that truth is tingling through every vein of my body. I will not work! I will only live, live, live!

MRS. WILTON: And what of me? Have I no right to happiness also?

ERHART: Oh, come, Fanny. Remember you acknowledge to being seven years older than I.

MRS. WILTON: So you throw my age in my face!

ERHART: There's no need. It's there—unmistakably—already.

MRS. WILTON (*passionately*): At last I understand you! Now

I know that you are guilty of the great, the terrible crime—that crime for which there is no forgiveness.

ERHART (*staring at her*): You must be out of your mind.

MRS. WILTON (*approaching him*): You are a murderer! You have committed the one mortal sin!

ERHART: You are raving, Fanny!

MRS. WILTON: You have killed the love-life in your soul! You have accomplished spiritual suicide!

ERHART: If you mean that I've grown tired of your perpetual nagging and your ungovernable temper, I'm quite prepared to admit it.

MRS. WILTON (*scornfully*): That's frank, at any rate. (*With intense emotion*) And I, who never knew happiness in my life, to be supplanted by a chit of a girl like that.

ERHART: What nonsense! Besides, it was your own proposal to bring Frida with us.

MRS. WILTON (*wringing her hands and in a wailing voice*): "He's falling back on me—he's falling back on me."

ERHART: Oh, I say, don't imitate Mrs. Allmers.

FRIDA: I wish I understood what it all means. John Gabriel, with his singing metal, his hammer-strokes that loosened it, and his midnight bell clanging to set it free, was sanity itself compared to this.

MRS. WILTON (*going to FRIDA, taking her by the shoulders, and shaking her*): Confess. It is you who have stolen him from me.

FRIDA: I! Dear Mrs. Wilton, I wouldn't have him at a gift.

MRS. WILTON (*falling back*): You would not?

FRIDA: A poor, feeble, invertebrate thing like that! No, thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Then there's some one else. (*To ERHART*) Who is it? Tell me! I will know! (*Towering over him*) If you don't speak, I'll kill you.

ERHART (*shrinking back*): You're so impetuous, Fanny. Do control yourself, and I'll explain.

MRS. WILTON (*sternly*): Go on.

ERHART: It all comes of my being the son of my father. Heredity, Fanny, heredity. Don't you remember what he once said to Aunt Ella? "As a woman, you were the dearest thing in the world to me. But if the worst comes to the worst, one woman can always take the place of another."

MRS. WILTON (*deadly calm*): And in our case the worst has come to the worst?

ERHART: Just so.

MRS. WILTON: Viper! Who is she?

ERHART: Don't be angry, Fanny. A—a little French milliner.

[MRS. WILTON *slowly walks to the sofa, and seats herself there. Her face is white and drawn, and her clenched hands held in front of her.*]

MRS. WILTON: So this is the end.

ERHART: I'm awfully sorry, Fanny. But as I said before—the Law of Change, you know, the Law of Change.

[*He glances furtively from one woman to the other. Neither responds.*]

ERHART: Well, I suppose it's no use my waiting here. Good-bye, Mrs. Wilton. Good-bye, Frida. Remember me to your father when next you're writing.

[MRS. WILTON and FRIDA *remain absolutely silent. After an awkward pause, ERHART shuffles uneasily to the door, opens it, and passes out, slamming it behind him.*]

FRIDA: He's gone, Fanny.

MRS. WILTON: Gone—yes.

FRIDA (*timidly*): Perhaps he'll think better of it and return presently.

MRS. WILTON (*in a dull toneless voice*): No; in Norway, when they slam the door behind them, they never return.

[FRIDA *mechanically moves to the piano, seats herself at it, and begins softly to play the "Danse Macabre."* The curtain falls.]

THE CITY OF LONDON AND THE DRAMA.

BY A. H. BILLING.

THE production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Merchant Taylors' Hall by the Elizabethan Stage Society, apart from the interesting nature of the experiment and the intrinsic value of the performance itself, suggests several interesting problems; and none, perhaps, of more importance than that of the relationship of the stage and the city in the early part of the Elizabethan era. In these days the "city fathers" patronise the drama as much as any other section of the community, and a society bent on reproducing the conditions existing in the days when unlicensed players were treated as "rogues and vagabonds" is welcomed in the hall of one of the oldest and most influential

of the city guilds. There is, moreover, a peculiar fitness in the first city performance of the Elizabethan Stage Society being given in the hall of the Merchant Taylors' Company, for the boys of Merchant Taylors' school frequently performed before Queen Elizabeth herself, and their efforts "for the solace of her majesty" only ceased when more competent performers appeared on the scene.

But it is with the struggle between the city and the stage, a struggle which occurred at a very critical period, and was fraught with consequences of the greatest moment to the development of the drama, that we are more particularly concerned in this article. The history of the Elizabethan period is the history of the birth and development of the English drama; and the action of the civic authorities, prompted as it was by widely-differing impulses, was a factor of considerable importance in determining the future of the stage and drama.

On the accession of Queen Elizabeth, dramatic performances, other than court performances, were given in the inn-yards and public gardens used for bear-baiting. The inns provided with a play-yard at this period were the Bell, in Gracechurch-street; the Bull, in Bishopsgate-street; the Belle Sauvage, on Ludgate-hill; "one nigh Paul's," one in Whitefriars, and one in Blackfriars; whilst in the reign of Queen Mary plays were also performed at the Boar's Head, without Aldgate, the last recorded performance at this inn taking place in 1557.

Plays were performed in these public yards, as rehearsals for the court performances, by companies of players supported by the great nobles, to whom the generic name of the Queen's players was given—although the Queen's company was not formed until about 1583—and also by companies of boy-players from the royal chapels and the grammar schools. These companies may be classified as follows: the Earl of Leicester's players, Sir Robert Riche's players, Lord Clinton's players, and Lord Charles Howard's players; the boys of Paul's, the Chapel, and Windsor choirs, and the scholars of Merchant Taylors' and Westminster schools. At various times, also, the members of the Inns of Courts gave performances in their halls. All these companies were supported for the pleasure of the court by the nobles; and, at the great festivals, the best performers appeared before the Queen. Gradually the boy companies disappeared, and the companies of the nobles increased in number and in strength. In their spare time these players travelled about, giving their performances in public. The drama itself was practically non-existent, the performances consisting of mystery-plays, morality-plays, or masques. This in brief was the con-

dition of theatrical affairs when Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558.

On April 7th, 1559, a royal proclamation was issued inhibiting the performance of all plays and interludes until after the following All-Hallowstide. This action must not be interpreted as antagonistic to the stage and its votaries, but merely as a political move to prevent the performance of religious plays opposed to the recently-established religion. This proclamation was followed by another, dated May 16th, requiring all players to obtain a license from the mayor or chief officer of any city in which they intended to perform, or from the lord lieutenant or two justices of the peace in the case of a shire. Plays reflecting on the state, religion, or policy were also forbidden under penalties. This proclamation only affected the companies playing outside the city, as the London players continued as before under the control of the Lord Mayor and Corporation. It is also worthy of note that on Twelfth Night, 1560, the first recorded city performance of the Elizabethan era took place in the Guildhall before the Lord Mayor and Corporation, who had previously attended divine service at St. Paul's Cathedral. The year 1563 is memorable, not merely as a "plague year," in which over twenty thousand persons died of the plague in London, but also as a year in which Archbishop Grindal began the struggle between the city and the clergy on the one hand, and the stage, backed by the court, on the other.

The opposition of the clergy can be readily understood. The city, from a clerical point of view, was a stronghold of the extreme Protestant party, and the city divines regarded the stage as a most dangerous snare and delusion of the devil. The incipient puritanism of the time fostered the feeling of opposition to the stage, which in turn reacted on the religious susceptibilities of the puritans, so that the elect were led to believe that the plague was a direct punishment from God for the wickedness of the stage. The theatrical performances proved a strong counter attraction to the services of the church, for Sundays and holy days were favourite days for the performance of plays in public; and, with many of the weaker members of the flock led away from the church to the inn-yards, it can be easily understood that the attitude of the church was one of uncompromising hostility.

The opposition of the civic authorities was based upon more varied grounds. In the first place, there was the indubitable fact that the collection of all sorts and conditions of men in the inn-yards and public play-places contributed largely to the dissemination of the plague; whilst the possibility of an uproar

and riot occurring in close proximity to the shops and residences of the wealthy citizens was a contingency not too remote to carry considerable weight with the Common Council. But what, perhaps, as much as any other consideration, induced the Lord Mayor and Corporation to join hands with the clergy, and wage a war of extermination on the stage, was the fact that the players were under the patronage of the court; and the city, ever jealous of its privileges, resented the attempt made by the Privy Council to rob the Corporation of its right to control the players within the boundaries of the city itself. In this way a most powerful combination was formed—a combination supported by the strength of religious conviction, an honest desire to protect the public health, and the determination of the citizens to preserve their ancient rights and privileges.

Matters were brought to a climax in May, 1574, by the granting of a royal patent to the Earl of Leicester's men—James Burbage, John Perkyn, John Lanham, William Johnson, and Robert Wylson—which, in addition to other privileges, authorised the company to perform in the city. It is evident that the Lord Mayor was not disposed to submit tamely to this usurpation of his rights as the licensing authority in the city, for on July 22nd of the same year the Privy Council found it necessary to send a letter requiring the Lord Mayor to admit the company within the city. There is no record of any direct reply by the Lord Mayor to this demand, but an Act of the Common Council, dated December 6th, 1574, imposing the penalties of fine and imprisonment on any player who should presume to perform within the city without a license from the Lord Mayor, may be taken as the city's answer and a declaration of war.

Soon after this an order was made by the Common Council prohibiting the performance of all interludes in public places in the city, which, in the following year, caused "Her Majesty's Poor Players" to petition the Privy Council for a letter to the Lord Mayor, requesting him to grant them permission to play in the city, "that they might be properly exercised to appear at Court." A long document was drawn up and sent to the Corporation setting forth at length the arguments in favour of the players. The Common Council replied to the arguments seriatim, and eventually a compromise was arrived at on terms proposed by the Corporation. These were that there should be no public performances until the number of deaths from the plague in London were less than fifty a week; that there should be no performances on Sundays, that on holidays there should be no playing until after evening prayer, and that the performance should end in time for the audience to reach home before dark;

and, lastly, that the "Queen's players" only, in one company, should be licensed.

So far the honours appeared to rest with the city, but the victory was rather apparent than real; and the action of the city, instead of stamping the life out of the drama, insured its ultimate success. Thwarted at every turn in the city, James Burbage, in 1576, erected "The Theater" in Shoreditch, just without the jurisdiction of the city, where his company under their royal patent were free from interference. The experiment was eminently successful, and was followed by the erection of several other theatres around the city. These were the Curtain, also in Shoreditch; the Rose, built by Henslowe in 1591, on the south bank of the Thames; the Swan, the Globe, and the Fortune. The erection of the first London theatres is directly traceable to the action of the civic authorities, which thus diverted into a fresh channel the rising stream of dramatic activity.

The existence of The Theatre and the Curtain, both of which were opened in 1578, was a direct insult to the Corporation, and the displeasure of that body was displayed by their refusal to license the inn-yards formerly occupied by the companies playing at the new theatres. Frequent complaints were made to the Privy Council with regard to the theatres, and the clergy continued their denunciation of the theatres and the city play-places. In 1579, the contest assumed a literary shape, by the publication of *The School of Abuse*, a bitter invective against players by Stephen Gosson, a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford. This was followed by a number of similar attacks, one of the best known being a *Ballad Against Plays*, or, as it was expressed—

A ringing retreat courageously sounded,
Wherein plays and players are fitly confounded.

It appears, however, that the civic authorities were not above employing the pens of disappointed dramatists, whose invective was increased by their want of success as supporters of the stage.

On the other side the pen was not idle, as the following lines, quoted by J. Payne Collier, in his *Annals of the Stage*, will show :—

THE FOOLS OF THE CITY.

List to my ditty !
Alas ! the more the pity,
From Troynovant's old city
The Aldermen and Mayor
Have driven each poor player.

The cause I will declare.
They wisely do complain
Of Wilson and Jack Lane,
And them who do maintain,
And 'stablish as a rule,
No one shall play the fool
But they—a worthy school.
Without a pipe and tabor
They only mean to labor
To teach each oxhead neighbor.
This is the cause and reason,
At every time and season,
That plays are worse than treason.

In 1582, the city was at last successful, for in that year "the magistrates obtained leave from her majesty to thrust the players out of the city, and to pull down all playhouses, which was accordingly effected." This victory, however much it may have smoothed the ruffled plumes of the city magnates, was robbed of its sting by the existence of *The Theatre* and the *Curtain*. On July 3rd, 1583, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Privy Council respecting the neglect of archery and the increase of unlawful games and pastimes, to the injury of the city. In the following year the Lord Mayor went so far as to send "two aldermen of the court for the suppressing and pulling down of *The Theatre* and the *Curtain*;" but both the buildings survived the attack. In 1586, the severity of the plague caused the theatres to be shut up for the greater part of the year, but the players were now becoming more independent of the court; and the hostility of the city seems to have correspondingly decreased. Indeed, in 1591, it was necessary for the Privy Council to write to the Lord Mayor requiring him "to suppress the performance of plays on Sundays; and also on Thursdays, because they interfered with bear-baiting, which was maintained for her majesty's pleasure." From 1592 to 1597 no plays or play-places are heard of in the city, and in this latter year, the dispute between the city and the stage, after lasting for thirty-five years, was closed for ever, by the erection, within the city proper, of the Blackfriars Theatre, which remained open until 1642.

The struggle for the defence of the privileges of the city had unintentionally the effect of removing the rising dramatists from the enervating patronage of the court to the bracing atmosphere of public opinion. No longer tied down by the necessity of suiting their tragedies and comedies to court performances, the group of university dramatists and actors who appeared on the scene in 1586 paved the way for the great master dramatist who was soon to appear. The action of the city authorities resulted in

the building of The Theatre and the Curtain, and the erection of those theatres "included the possibility of Shakspeare."

EUGÈNE LABICHE.

BY H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

A FRIEND was kind enough to lend me, a few weeks ago, the complete dramatic works of Eugène Labiche; sixty pieces of various dimensions bound together in ten volumes. They are, within the domain of comedy and farce, of every kind; including, it must be admitted, in a few rare instances, *le genre ennuyeux*. In the whole collection there is not one piece—long or short—of serious interest. Even in the most philosophical of the comedies (and a good many of Labiche's comedies are based on some moral or philosophical idea), there is scarcely one serious incident or scene. The somewhat ambitious comedy called *Moi*, which Labiche wrote by invitation for the Théâtre Français, and which was produced at that classical establishment without much success, contains some emotional passages for two mutually devoted young men, who suddenly discover that they are in love with the same girl. But the skilful dramatist loosens and unties this familiar dramatic knot with rapidity and ease. One of the lovers finds that the young lady does not care for him in return, and in virtue of that selfishness which, in one form or another, is satirized throughout the piece, is at once cured of his ill-placed passion.

The extremely droll farce called *Frisette* has, moreover, a sentimental ending—a point interesting to note, inasmuch as *Frisette* is the original of our own immortal *Box and Cox*. With the plots of sixty different pieces in my head, I may perhaps be mistaken. But the two just mentioned are the only ones I can call to mind in which Labiche's comedy or farce turns for a moment to something like pathos.

Everyone has heard that *Box and Cox* is of French origin; but from what particular French piece it was derived, I, for one, never knew until I read the other day, for the first time, the *Frisette* of Eugène Labiche. It is strange as one goes through the volumes of this most amusing dramatist, to meet again and again the original of some well-known English play—*Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, treated first by John Oxenford, who made a portion of it (the foot-bath scene) into a one-act farce, and afterwards, with far greater success, by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who, in *A Wedding March*, was content to reduce the five acts of the original to three; *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, adapted to the

English stage by the late Henry Mayhew, and also by Mr. Herman Merivale; *Les Petites Mains*, converted by Mr. G. R. Sims into *Crutch and Toothpick*; *Les Petits Oiseaux*, called in Mr. Grundy's English version *A Pair of Spectacles*: not to mention some minor pieces, such as *Un Garçon de Chez Véry*, travestied into English under the title of *Whitebait at Greenwich*.

Now the writers of all, or nearly all, the above-named adaptations from Labiche's comedies and farces were dramatists who had earned reputation by works of their own invention. John Maddison Morton, however, the recognised author of *Box and Cox*, never produced any absolutely original work; and it is difficult, therefore, to understand how he managed to transform *Frisette*, which contains little more than the fundamental idea of *Box and Cox*, into *Box and Cox* itself.

Frisette is either a florist or a milliner's girl, who, going out very early in the morning, comes back towards night. One evening she finds, not for the first time, that some one has been smoking in her room. She makes inquiries without being able to obtain from her landlady any satisfactory explanation. Suddenly, a young compositor, who has forgotten something, comes back to his room—which is also *Frisette*'s room—to look for the missing article. He is smoking a pipe and, without putting it out, begs *Frisette*, who is in occupation, to make herself quite at home. *Frisette*, equally sarcastic, tells him not to mind her, but to go on smoking as though the place belonged to him. The compositor, who is a good young man, regards the situation as rather compromising; and he becomes quite alarmed when he finds that *Frisette* has an infant child under her care which might be her own; but, as a matter of fact, is hers only by adoption. Then it appears that the good young man had once been a bad young man; and that being very much in love with *Frisette*'s most intimate friend, he had, nevertheless, omitted to marry her, though the young lady had responded to his affection in such a manner as to render marriage most desirable. A child was born—the child *Frisette* has since adopted; the mother died, and the repentance of the young compositor, when the whole of the sad story has been unfolded to him, is such that it touches the heart of *Frisette*, who ends by giving her hand to the father of the child she had already made her own. Thus the original of *Box and Cox* is constructed on a plot which might serve for a full-sized melodrama.

But *Frisette* is not the sole French piece in which two persons come together in a room each believes to be his own; and it is more than possible that *Frisette* may be only one of two

pieces laid under contribution by the ingenious but not inventive Maddison-Morton for the formation of *Box and Cox*—a super-excellent farce, of whatever materials it may be composed.

If Labiche danced in chains when he attempted to amuse, and at the same time edify, the audience of the Théâtre Français with a comedy made to order, he showed himself equally fettered in attempting to entertain that august public by means of a small one-act piece (*La Cigale chez les Fourmis*) which he wrote in conjunction with Legouv  , the well-known collaborator of Scribe in the *Bataille de Dames* and *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. So remarkably free and easy at the Palais Royal, with Gausson, Ravel, and Hyacinthe for his interpreters, Labiche at the Com  die Fran  aise is always on his best behaviour. He makes few, if any jokes; and Legouv   (author of a handbook on literary composition) seems to have corrected his French. Moli  re was said to be no longer Moli  re when he put on the burlesque disguise of Scapin; and Labiche is no longer Labiche when he casts aside his grotesque pleasantries, his wild, fantastic humour.

The author of those delightfully extravagant farces, *La Cagnotte* and *La Grammaire*—two favourite pieces of the Imperial repertory, when, under Napoleon III., theatrical representations were given so plentifully at Compi  gne—was asked to write a comedy for the Emperor's private theatre; with much the same result as when he received a similar invitation from the Théâtre Fran  ais. All this tells in favour of Labiche's genius. He was at his best when most spontaneous. Writing to order for a specified purpose, he was in the position of an inspired bard manufacturing poems by Royal Command, or in fulfilment of his duties as Versifier to the Court.

Labiche's best pieces are already known in England, though not, as a rule, in connection with Labiche's name. *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, however, and *La Grammaire*, have both been published in annotated editions, with the author's name on the title-page, for the use of English schools; the teachers of the present day wishing, apparently, to amuse their pupils as well as instruct them. Labiche had (for his ready wit) been elected a member of the French Academy, and this alone gives to his best works a sort of classical stamp. On the occasion of his formal reception, the academician who received him laid stress, I remember, on the fact that though his works may not be absolutely free from impropriety, he touches doubtful topics, unbecoming themes, without dwelling upon them, and only with the view of provoking laughter. Indeed, the frank gaiety of Labiche carries off a situation, and causes it to be forgotten in the hilarity it has called forth, where the cold-blooded cynicism

of Zola would deliberately extract from it all its horror. Looking upon everything with the eye of a comedy writer, and seeing in all complications nothing but the comic, the droll, the utterly grotesque side, Labiche seems as innocent in the midst of vicious as of virtuous surroundings. Those of his comedies which have been done into English are absolutely harmless. But he has written others on the subject of the eternal *ménage à trois*, which in England would not be so regarded. The lover, however, in these pieces has an exceedingly bad time, and he is sometimes rendered supremely ridiculous.

All might have been inspired by one line in Molière, which I will not quote, but which sets forth that the position of deceived husband "has, like other things, its advantages." This great principle is exemplified in three very ingenious and amusing acts, constituting together the brilliant Palais Royal comedy called *Le Plus Heureux des Trois*. "The happiest of the Three" is of course the husband. Troubled by her conscience, the wife does all she can in the way of delicate attentions to atone for her misconduct. The young man places himself absolutely at the husband's disposal, executing his commissions, watering his plants, digging his garden, and repairing his furniture. The guilty pair, meanwhile, live in a constant state of anxiety and terror. Every moment they are on the point of being discovered, and they know no peace until at last the young man, in order to quiet the husband's suspicions, which have at last been roused, hastens, with the fullest consent and approbation of the wife, to marry a young woman whom he does not love.

In *Célimare le Bien Aimé*, a gentleman with a past, which on getting married he strives to bury, finds this inexorable past rising up against him in the most unexpected forms. The husbands of his former loves are all devoted to him; and one of them, who is now a widower, insists quite pathetically on spending all his time with Célimare just as Célimare, "when they were all there so happy together," used to spend all his time with him. I have not been able to determine the exact moral basis of this piece; which is, in any case, wonderfully diverting.

In a third of what, at first, seems to be one of Labiche's ordinary triangular comedies the triangle is, by the addition of a new primary character, converted into a square. In this dramatic quadrilateral one side is formed by the wife, a second side by the husband, a third by the first of two lovers, and the fourth by the second of these lovers. The second lover, as yet unsuspected, loathes the first, and, setting the husband upon him, forms a plan for his destruction. But the husband is a man

of peace, and cannot execute the terrible vengeance placed within his reach. In spite of everything, moreover, he likes No. 1; a retired officer, who for years past has played *piquet* or *écarté* with him every evening, who once fought a duel on his behalf, and whom by a timely loan he has saved from bankruptcy. This last point is worth noting; for all who have seen or read *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon* will remember that, according to Labiche's philosophy, the men we really like are not those who have placed us under an obligation, but those whom we have ourselves obliged. In the end, Lover No. 2, who claims to be the ruler of some unfamiliar territory in the remoter parts of Mexico, finding that the husband will neither poison Lover No. 1, nor, by the mere pressure of a finger, push him over a Swiss cataract, resolves himself to despatch the hated rival. A forest duel in the American style is arranged. But the husband, unable to bear the idea of his old friend being shot through the heart, tells him by what device the Mexican proposes first to draw his fire, and then mercilessly put him to death. The Mexican, however, changes his plan of attack. Borrowing an idea from the last act of *Macbeth*—or, perhaps, from our Jack in the Green of May Day—he arrays himself in a garment of leaves and branches so that he may advance unobserved upon his unconscious antagonist. Thus attired, however, he meets the first cause of all these complications, and embracing her, in spite of his sylvan costume, is caught in the act by the astounded and indignant husband. Lover No. 1 coming in at the same time, the husband, deeply moved, exclaims to him: "Behold the woman for whom you sacrificed our friendship!"

The Mexican, at the sight of the loved one, had placed his rifle against the wall; and the husband now seizes it and threatens to shoot this second, and by far the most offensive, of his betrayers, unless he swears to take the lady away with him, once and for ever, to his kingdom beyond the sea.

Having got rid of these two most objectionable characters, the husband, Martin by name, considers what he shall do with his faithless friend, the retired officer.

"How could you do such a thing!" he exclaims.

"*J'étais officier d'Etat Major!*" replies the Captain in a tone at once of repentance and of excuse. It was expected of him; and the uniform was so brilliant!

He might have added, but that the explanation would have been unbecoming, that he did not know M. Martin at the beginning of the affair, and that, after making his personal acquaint-

ance, he found it impossible, in spite of earnest endeavours, to liberate himself from the persistently unfaithful wife. But he confines himself to the main fact. *J'étais officier d'Etat Major!*

The betrayer must be punished, however. M. Martin asks him how much money he has. The Captain possesses so many thousand francs. "With that sum," says M. Martin, "you will found a prize. It shall be called *Le Prix Martin*, and be awarded annually to the author of the ablest essay on the infamy of perverting the wife of one's best friend. You might compete for it yourself," he adds.

The two old friends have now both been deceived; a reflection from which Martin derives considerable satisfaction. They are about to part for ever. On this point Martin is inexorable. He cannot help reflecting, however, as he sits down to a table on which there happens to be a pack of cards, that the Captain once fought for him.

"You shed your blood," he says, "for my sake!" He takes up the cards and proceeds mechanically to shuffle them.

"Nor can I forget," replies the Captain, who is now also sitting at the table, "that you once saved me from ruin."

"That was a trifle," says Martin. "Please cut."

"No! whatever else I may be," continues the Captain, as he cuts the cards, "I am not ungrateful."

"You have other faults," answers Martin, dealing the cards. "Diamonds are trumps."

"And I hold the king!" cries the Captain.

"Always the king!" exclaims Martin.

"But this time," says the Captain with a contrite air, "I shall not mark it."

"His repentance already begins!" murmurs Martin; and the curtain falls on the two deadly foes already half reconciled, partly by mutual regard—chiefly by invincible habit.

It must be added that this excellent comedy—Labiche's very best in one particular style—was written in collaboration with his intimate and admiring friend, Emile Augier, who certainly lost nothing by being taken to the Palais Royal, where *Le Prix Martin* was produced, though Labiche lost a good deal when he was carried by Legouvé to the Comédie Française.

The "cry from the heart" uttered by Martin when he sees his wife in the arms of the Mexican, "Behold the woman to whom you have sacrificed our friendship!" is too dramatic not to be by Augier. It is worthy of Balzac, and not in the least like

Labiche, who (to vary one of the last remarks of M. Martin to the Captain) “has other merits”—and very considerable ones.

ENGLISH ACTORS IN GERMANY.

By A. B.

A LECTURE was recently given by Dr. Philips, before the New Philological Society of Cologne, on “The Wanderings of English Actors in Germany.” The lecturer observed that it was not generally known that 300 years ago dramatic art in Germany was entirely under English influence. It is true that in the second half of the sixteenth century there were permanent theatres in some German towns, such as Augsburg and Nuremberg; but the performers were school-children or honest artisans, so that there could be no question of any artistic qualities in the acting. Nevertheless, at the same period dramatic art was in full bloom in England, and in addition to the Court, some of the nobility kept regular dramatic companies.

So great was the competition and ambition of these little societies of actors, that not only London, but even England proved too small for them; and in the last decade of Elizabeth’s reign it was no unusual thing to meet with travelling companies of English comedians in Holland, Germany, and Denmark. In many princely residences they gave long performances; but they were not above going elsewhere when it paid them to do so. These light-hearted birds of passage visited Cologne among other places, and the council made definite regulations as to giving permission to act and the prices to be paid for admission; at the same time exercising a careful censorship over the pieces performed. Later on, when these companies had more success, and earned considerable sums of money, the Council decided to levy an “amusement tax,” and only permitted performances on condition of by no means nominal contributions to the support of the town orphans and foundlings. The desolation which befell Germany during the Thirty Years’ War interrupted the visits of the English actors; but they made their appearance again as soon as peace was declared. The performances were at first given exclusively in the English language, and this circumstance makes it easy to understand why the clown plays so important a part in these pieces. It is not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that it is recorded that English companies gave German pieces, original and translated. In the year 1611,

for instance, the "German comedy of the *Jew of Venice*, from the English," appeared upon the boards in Halle.

THE PRICE OF THE PLAY.

BY ERNEST KUHE.

AT last! It has been talked of again and again, discussed from every conceivable point of view, and advocated far and wide; but, until now, it has always ended in smoke. By "it" I refer to a great reform in matters theatrical, and one which we are to owe shortly to Mr. Tree. The other day this actor-manager sent us a message across the seas which was certainly far more gratifying to the general community than the self-glorification paragraphs that usually reach London concerning the doings of our stage favourites when they visit our cousins in America. It is always pleasant, of course, to hear of the triumphal progress of our friends of the footlights in the new world, where the dramatic art, beyond doubt, is better understood and more discriminately appreciated than we are sometimes led to believe. But from the personal and purely egotistical standpoint of the playgoer, Mr. Tree's "message of peace" was worth all the trumpet-blowing and echoes of critical eulogies that are so frequently wafted to us from across the herring-pond. The sum and substance of it was this: that when he begins his season at the new and sumptuous theatre hard by his old home, which he has built on the site of a once famous opera-house, he is going to give the play-lover of modest means, whose wants in this respect have for years been persistently neglected, the opportunity of seeing a play acted, staged, and produced according to all our modern requirements, for a reasonable sum, without having to endure the discomforts, fatigue, and inconvenience involved by fighting his way into the pit, or else by occupying a seat in unpleasant proximity to the roof and looking down upon the stage from the stuffy altitude of an upper circle.

It will be said that there is nothing new in all this, that the thing has been tried before, and that, as for Mr. Tree, his intention to take such a step as is now announced was proclaimed long ago. It is perfectly true that an intimation to this effect was made public when it became known that the Haymarket manager was going to shift his quarters; but the wiseacres—who are so wonderfully wise—shook their clever

heads, turned up their superior noses, and scouted the idea as preposterous. And then came so-called "official" contradictions, only to be followed, as has now been seen, by an official confirmation of the original announcement. But all's well that ends well, and so this side of the question may well be dropped. When we turn, however, to the stale, hackneyed, and threadbare argument—urged, assuredly, in the managerial and not in the playgoer's interests—that there is no real public want for such a reform as is now happily to be instituted, what are the true facts? Simply these: that for years out of mind, with the exception of one or two isolated cases, when an attempt was made to draw the public to second-rate or mediocre productions by the bait of "popular prices," theatre-goers at the west-end have had to submit to the state of things inaugurated under the old Bancroft *régime*, and either pay for their evening's amusement a sum out of all proportion to their means, or meekly put up with the hardships and tiresome disabilities indicated above. Just consider for one moment the position in which the London playgoer of to-day really finds himself! He is anxious to see and judge for himself the merits of the latest and most approved production. Probably it will be a "musical comedy;"—but let that pass. If he happens to be endowed with a fair share of the world's riches, he can go to the box-office and book in advance a couple of seats (the manager will allow him to take more if he likes)—one for himself, and one for his wife, his sister, his cousin, or his aunt (in all probability, though, not the latter). It is reasonable to assume that the persons who care to spend an evening at the play in solitary grandeur are in a minority; so that it comes to this—that, let alone incidental expenses in the way of cabs, programmes, cloak-rooms, and gratuities (which are sometimes prohibited, but never refused), his night's entertainment costs the affluent playgoer a guinea. To make matters short, the comfort-loving theatre-goer has also the option of a seat in the dress-circle for 7s. 6d., and then the only other reserved places (leaving, of course, the private box of the Croesus out of the question) are in that hot, stifling, and lofty region known as the "upper circle"—surely an ironical designation. Here, unless you chance to find yourself in the front row, you are in possession, I venture to affirm, of a perfectly odious "coign of vantage," and one, nevertheless, for which you have to pay four or five shillings. Your only other alternative is the pit or the abode of the "gods," as to which I have already spoken, but which, in reality, hardly enter into the question at all.

In a word, the London manager considers, apparently, that there are only two classes of playgoers—those who want luxuries and can afford to pay for them, and those who don't want luxuries and can't. He is labouring under a monumental delusion. He is altogether wrong in his reckoning ; for he has left out of account, snapped his fingers at, and entirely ignored the existence of the man of culture, of refinement, and of taste in all that concerns art, who is devoted to the drama, but utterly unable to do things *en prince*, and wholly averse to going to the other extreme. We all know that man (needless to say he does *not* come from Sheffield). We meet him every day, and at dinner, even in a chop-house ; he is something of an epicure. But the theatrical manager apparently has never even heard of him, and remains, therefore, content to win the suffrages of the two classes I have named, and remain oblivious to the claims of that large section of the public—for it is, without doubt, a large one—that now stays away from the theatre simply because inadequate provision is made for it. It all amounts to this : that half the people who now pay four shillings for the privilege of sitting in that abominable “ upper circle ” would gladly give another shilling for a really commodious seat in a good part of the house ; while at least half of those who, by reason of the discomfort of sitting elsewhere, now *occasionally* go to the play “ in style,” and take a stall or dress-circle ticket at great personal sacrifice, would go twice as often if they could have a good seat not far removed from the stage for less money. But this obvious and salient fact is ignored, in the same way as the would-be playgoer aforesaid, who now solves the difficulty by simply “ staying away,” save on rare occasions, and in the same way as is the vital competition—undreamt of a few years ago—that the west-end managers now have to face at the hands of their confrères in the suburbs. I recollect reading in the columns of *The Theatre* a highly interesting and suggestive article as to the influence likely to be exerted in time on the managerial coffers in London proper by the rapid growth of the movement for building outlying playhouses, and educating suburban dwellers up to appreciating the compliment thus paid them. On that point, therefore, I need offer no remarks. Suffice it that the extent of the said “ influence ” must be palpable to the least thoughtful when it is found that theatres like the Grand at Islington, the Métropole in Camberwell, and the new house at Brixton—to mention only three—are packed, in and out of season, whenever a west-end success is brought to their boards ; and packed, be it remembered, by an audience which pays, on a

rough computation, from forty to sixty per cent. less for its amusement than does any audience in the west-end.

But does the west-end lessee recognise this influence which everybody else sees is at work? Not he. He is supremely indifferent to it, seemingly, and is content to let things go on in the "old sweet way," and take, it may be supposed, a roseate view of the future. He believes in Doctor Pangloss's creed. But, all the same, he had his experience when the music-halls came along, their forerunners having been swept away, and, by the prettiness, brightness, and all-round attractiveness of the entertainment they offered to the public, took thousands of people away from the theatres—and kept them, be it added, ever since. And why? Not only because the entertainment given is immeasurably superior to and more refined than that which used formerly to pass muster for an evening's "amusement," but also because the prices charged are reasonable and not out of all proportion to the outlay involved by the management.

For this, after all, is the crux of the whole business from the ethical point of view. There are two sides to every question, and I should be sorry to lay myself open to the suspicion that, in my opinion, our managers, one and all, are charging playgoers more than they are justified in demanding. It stands to reason that the enormous expenses incurred, for example, by Sir Henry Irving in a Lyceum production, by Mr. Alexander with an elaborate Shaksperian revival or even a *Prisoner of Zenda*, by Mr. D'Oyly Carte, with a full band and chorus in addition to a big salary list, or in the same way by Mr. George Edwardes with such artists as Miss Marie Tempest, Mr. Hayden Coffin, and Miss Letty Lind, and as with those who make up the stupendous combination in *The Circus Girl*, cannot possibly run their shows at provincial prices. But if these gentlemen, notwithstanding their enormous outlay, can make a profit—and a handsome one—with ten-and-sixpenny stalls, how is it that the minor managers, such as those, say, who produce a farcical comedy with a small and comparatively inexpensive cast, who have a far smaller rent to pay, a so-called "orchestra" of eight or nine performers, and one or two unpretentious "sets" to find—how comes it that they cannot see fit to admit the public at prices below those imposed by managers whose initial and weekly expenses are at least three times as great? That there is something radically wrong here must be patent to anybody who has given the subject one moment's consideration. The difficulty, as voiced by the proprietors, would seem to be the old one—that if they reduce the prices of admission the public would at once grow suspicious, and say to themselves: "This

must be an inferior sort of production that can be run so cheaply as to enable us to see it for less than we are accustomed to pay.' Let us assume that this is the case, and that the public are sufficiently fatuous and illogical to reason in this way. But there still remains one escape from the difficulty, and with Mr. Tree rests the credit—if not of having discovered it, at least of being the first manager of position and authority to avail himself of it. In other words, he has adopted, or rather is about to adopt, a system of “intermediate” prices, and will make a bold and practical attempt by instituting “second-price” stalls and dress-circle seats, to meet the demands of those who for years have cried out against the excessive cost of playgoing “in comfort,” and have strenuously advocated reform in this connection.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE past month has been somewhat uneventful, so far as productions of any real significance are concerned. But the immediate future promises to be more fruitful, inasmuch as, apart from the first performance in English of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, unfortunately postponed for some little time owing to the regretted illness of Miss Ellen Terry, at the Lyceum, we are to have very shortly two important new plays—*The Princess and the Butterfly: or the Fantastics*, by Mr. A. W. Pinero, at the St. James's, and *The Physician*, by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, at the Criterion.

NELSON'S ENCHANTRESS.

A Play, in Four Acts, by RISDEN HOME. Produced at the Avenue Theatre, February 11.

Ferdinand	Mr. CHARLES GOODHART	Captain Hardy	Mr. FRANK DYALL
Sir William Hamilton ..	Mr. NUTCOMBE GOULD	Lieutenant Nisbet	Mr. E. H. BROOKE
Sir John Trevor	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH	Servant to Romney	Mr. J. WILLES
Captain Horatio Nelson ..	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON	Queen of Naples	Miss CLARA DENMAN
The Hon. Charles Greville ..	Mr. A. ELWOOD	Mrs. Cadogan	Mrs. E. H. BROOKE
George Romney	Mr. P. BEN GREET	Bridget	Miss MARIANNE CALDWELL
Captain The Hon. H. Blackwood	Mr. C. M. LOWNE	Miss Emma Hart	Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL

Nelson's Enchantress stands condemned both historically and dramatically, for neither does the piece afford a true impression of the events with which it deals, nor is it a good play. As a series of independent pictures it might possibly be allowed to pass, but something more than that is rightly demanded at the theatre. The authoress, who conceals her identity under the pseudonym of "Risden Home," has undertaken the impossible task of whitewashing Emma Hart, and the attempt, it has to be said, has only resulted in failure. In her endeavour to accomplish this, she has not scrupled to pervert history, to suppress or to distort any facts that failed to accord with her theories, and, worst of all, to degrade and belittle the character of England's greatest naval hero. To add to her crimes, she has produced a drama feebly written and inadequately treated. At every turn the hand of the novice can be discerned. It is revealed in the sketchiness of the characterisation, the inadequacy of the motives, and the lack of dramatic fibre throughout the

piece. The real history of the relations existing between Nelson and Lady Hamilton is well known, and has long since replaced the fictitious version circulated by the lady herself. We would not pay "Risden Home" so poor a compliment as to suggest that she is ignorant of the circumstance, although the only alternative left us is to condemn her on the score of wild perversity. Her play is crowded with anachronisms and incidents for which there is absolutely no authority. It opens in Romney's studio in the year 1786. Thither the beautiful Emma has repaired to sit for the great painter, and there we find her sparring and quarrelling with her protector, Charles Greville. Presently Nelson himself is introduced—Nelson, who at that moment was in the West Indies paying somewhat frigid court to his future wife, Mrs. Nisbet! Emma's odd behaviour at Ranelagh is offered as a sufficient reason for the rupture between Greville and herself, and, stung to the quick by her lover's reproaches, she vows she will become Sir William Hamilton's wife. Thus is history written—on the stage! Twelve years elapse, and the scene changes to a room in the British Embassy at Naples. Here again we become the victims of "Risden Home's" imagination. Emma Hart, now Lady Hamilton, openly confesses her love to Nelson, but, in a burst of magnanimity, insists on sending him back to England and to duty. To the period during which she was Sir William's mistress, or to the facile transfer of her affections from Greville to him, there is, of course, no allusion. For all that we learn from "Risden Home," Emma might have been the purest and most cruelly maligned woman in the world. Five years later we assist at her parting with Nelson, at Merton, whence he goes forth to take command of the fleet, and win death and everlasting honour at the battle of Trafalgar. The last act is little more than a tableau, representing the familiar scene in the cockpit of the fleet, where Nelson dies in the arms of Hardy at the moment of his greatest triumph. Let us repeat, however, that such episodical presentments do not constitute a play and *Nelson's Enchantress* consequently leaves the audience cold and unsatisfied. Nor are the characters sufficiently life-like to afford the performers any opportunity for scoring a success. In appearance Mr. Forbes Robertson's Nelson left nothing to be desired, but the man himself is only faintly outlined. Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Lady Hamilton was a distinct disappointment. The opening scenes were played with considerable charm and vivacity, but as the piece progressed Mrs. Campbell seemed to lose her hold upon the part, the emotional side of which appeared to be entirely beyond her

powers of expression. Mr. Arthur Elwood made an admirable Greville, at all times firm, dignified, and impressive, while Mr. Sydney Brough, if occasionally a trifle too hysterical, was effective as Sir John Trevor. The remaining characters are of so shadowy a kind as hardly to call for notice.

THE DAUGHTERS OF BABYLON.

A Play, in Four Acts, by WILSON BARRETT. Produced at the Lyric Theatre, February 6.

Zoar	Mr. ALFRED BRYDONE	Heldia	Miss ROSS-SELWICKE
Lemuel	Mr. WILSON BARRETT	Alorus	Mr. AMBROSE MANNING
Jediah	Mr. FRANKLIN MCLEAY	Mananahim	Mr. PERCY FOSTER
Sabaal	Mr. CHARLES HUDSON	Parnach	Mr. GEORGE BERNAGE
Hezron	Mr. GEORGE WENSLEYDALE	Secheni	Mr. NORMAN JEFFRIES
Elymas	Mr. HORACE HODGES	Elcia	Miss LILY HANBURY
Elkanus	Mr. STAFFORD SMITH	Meraioth	Miss CONSTANCE COLLIER
Naomi	Miss HELEN BANCROFT	Sarepta	Miss DAISY BELMORE
Elna	Miss MAUD JEFFRIES	Zephathah	Miss ELLEN GOSS

Seldom has a more beautiful series of stage pictures been provided for the delectation of the spectator than that presented in Mr. Wilson Barrett's new play, *The Daughters of Babylon*. By the wonderful magic of the scene-painter, the imagination of the audience is at once captured and held enthralled as picture after picture of unparalleled loveliness unfolds itself. The sweet pastoral simplicity of the first, revealing Naomi's Well, with its vast expanse of surrounding country, supplies a startling contrast to the exquisite glimpse that follows of Babylon by night, illumined by countless flaring beacons, its massive buildings assuming a softened aspect under the clear light of the moon, while, through the silent city, flows the mighty Euphrates. Take, again, the scene in the public square, with its animated crowd, its richly attired citizens, and picturesque slaves. Or pass to that depicting the Judgment Seat by the City of Zoar, where Lemuel confronts the entire tribe, and is called upon to answer to his brother's charge of having tempted away and seduced Elna, his betrothed. Others there are of a scarcely less striking nature, the whole constituting a singularly enticing feast for the eye of the onlooker. Judged from the pictorial side alone, the play fulfils, and indeed surpasses, all possible requirements.

In the matter of pure stage-craft, it does not, on the other hand, rank with *The Sign of the Cross*. The plot of the later piece is developed with much less skill; nor is there to be found in it the same sustained interest or directness of purpose. So far as the dialogue is concerned, there is little to choose between the two works, both being written in a pretentious and bombastic style, calculated to deceive only the ignorant as to its hollowness. Nor is there any evidence that Mr. Barrett possesses more than

a superficial knowledge of the times and people of which he treats. True, he has drawn largely upon the Old Testament for the purposes of his play; but an author may do that and yet give abundant proof that he has failed to be inspired by the real spirit of the period. Let us, however, offer as briefly as possible a sketch of the story invented by Mr. Barrett. Elna, although betrothed to Jediah, son of Zoar, loves and is beloved by Lemuel, Jediah's younger brother. Recognising his brother's rights, Lemuel departs for Babylon, whither he is followed by Elna, attired as a boy. In Babylon, Lemuel becomes a welcome guest at the house of Ishtar, a beautiful courtesan whose attentions he suffers with the view of fostering a conspiracy which has for its motive the overthrow of the Babylonian power and the release of the Jews from their captivity. Aided by chance, Elna discovers Lemuel at Ishtar's side. Ishtar herself speedily penetrates the other's secret, and a charge of uttering treasonable sentiments having been brought against Lemuel, the two lovers are thrown into prison. Meanwhile, Jediah, eager for revenge, has followed them to the capital, but finds himself thwarted by Ishtar, whom at an earlier period he had himself lured away from her husband, thus committing the very crime with which he charges his brother. By the king's command Lemuel and Elna are exposed for sale in the public square, and respectively "knocked down" to Ishtar and to Alorus, the latter a Babylonian noble who has been struck by the girl's beauty. At the critical moment, however, a revolt takes place, and the two escape. From Babylon they fly to Zoar, determined to invite the judgment of the tribe upon their conduct. Thither they are followed by Ishtar and Alorus, both of whom are now converted characters. Jediah, acting in the double capacity of accuser and of judge, denounces his brother, but is suddenly nonplussed by the unexpected appearance of Ishtar, who, in a strangely melodramatic scene, forces him to retract all he has said, and to clear Lemuel's character. Of the performance it is possible to speak in terms of considerable praise. Mr. Wilson Barrett, as Lemuel, played with characteristic force, although the extreme wordiness of the part somewhat militated against his success. Very graceful and tender was Miss Maud Jeffries as Elna, while Miss Lily Hanbury made a handsome and powerful Ishtar, albeit her manner tended occasionally to over-emphasis. Mr. Franklin McLeay, admirable otherwise as Jediah, also displayed rather too great a partiality for melodramatic means. Two less important parts were most effectively sustained by Mr. Charles Hudson and Mr. Horace Hodges, while

Mr. Ambrose Manning's impersonation of Alorus deserves to figure among the chief successes of the evening.

HIS MAJESTY.

A Comic Opera, in Two Acts, by F. C. BURNAND and R. C. LEHMANN. Music by A. C. MACKENZIE.
Produced at the Savoy Theatre, February 20.

Ferdinand the Fifth ..	Mr. GEORGE GROSSMITH	Adam ..	Mr. HERBERT WORKMAN
Count Cosmo ..	Mr. SCOTT RUSSELL	Princess Lucilla Chloris	Miss FLORENCE PERRY
Baron Vincentius ..	Mr. JONES HEWSON	Felice ..	Madame ILKA PALMAY
Baron Michael ..	Mr. EARLDON	Duchess Gonzara ..	Miss MACAULAY
Prince Max ..	Mr. CHARLES KENNINGHAM	Dame Gertrude ..	Miss BESSIE BONSALE
Mopolio VII. ..	Mr. FRED BILLINGTON	Helena ..	Miss JESSIE ROSE
Boodel ..	Mr. WALTER PASSMORE	Dorothea ..	Miss RUTH VINCENT
Herr Schnippentrimmer ..	Mr. BRYAN	Claudina ..	Miss MILDRED BAKER
Chevalier Klarkstein de Frise	Mr. H. CHARLES		

The event of the month in the domain of comic opera was the production of *His Majesty* at the Savoy. For this piece several hands were responsible, Mr. F. C. Burnand inventing the plot and writing the dialogue, Messrs. R. C. Lehmann and Adrian Ross furnishing the lyrics between them, while Sir A. C. Mackenzie composed the music. In such cases "too many cooks" is invariably the complaint when all does not go well; but in the present instance the old adage only applies in a limited sense, inasmuch as the broth was by no means spoilt—it only suffered, like an Italian *menestrone*, from the undue thickness and excessive quantity of its ingredients. The natural remedy to suggest would be the addition of some good strong ordinary *bouillon*, but as a matter of fact there was too much of *His Majesty* already, and it was only by a cutting-down process that the correct balance of parts could possibly be restored. By now this has doubtless been done, and if well done, we see no reason why the new Savoy opera should not have been converted from a questionable into a solid and certain success.

Mr. Burnand does not pretend to have constructed a brand-new plot. So much may be gathered from the satirical utterances of his amateur detective, Boodel, whose "dramatic instinct" enables him to guess the old woodcutter's story of the child and the box left in his charge by the mysterious lady. It is "most interesting," he remarks, but "too old and too obvious to be true." Nevertheless, it makes a good basis for a comic opera book, and the development is by no means lacking in novel features, these being evolved for the greater part from the peculiarities of the vain and self-sufficient ruler of Vignolia, who forms the central figure in the action. Mr. George Grossmith

was too nervous on the first night to do entire justice either to himself or to this cleverly-conceived personage, in whom it is easy to trace certain characteristics not altogether unlike those which distinguish a youthful and impulsive monarch of our own time. The idea of a royal picture gallery, containing only canvases signed *Rex pinxit*, and thrown open gratuitously to an unresponsive public, is distinctly funny; and not less so is the notion of sending samples of his majesty's skill as gifts to neighbouring sovereigns, one of whom "rejects" the proffered gem, and thereby creates a *casus belli* essential to the working out of the story. But there are many such "happy thoughts" in Mr. Burnand's libretto, especially the first act, and the only pity is that the dramatic interest begins to fall off just where it ought to be strongest, otherwise the scene between Boodel and King Mopolio (who only comes upon the stage a few minutes before the curtain falls) should prove, in the hands of clever comedians like Mr. Passmore and Mr. Fred Billington, one of the most diverting in the opera. As it is, the former has previously contrived to "skim off the cream" at every opportunity for comic effect, doing so, moreover, by dint of sheer talent and well-directed energy. Mr. Grossmith's humour is of a different calibre, but he plays a difficult rôle with skill, and really has no need to fall back upon imitations of Mr. Beerbohm Tree as a means of entertaining his audience.

The music of *His Majesty* is, apart from its wealth of technical resource and refined melody, remarkable for the fact that it is not in the slightest degree Sullivanesque. Dealing, as he had to, with characters and lyrics that savour rather strongly of the Gilbertian flavour, Sir A. C. Mackenzie must have found it anything but an easy task to avoid suggestions or reminiscences of his accomplished brother composer. That he has succeeded in doing so, and yet written number after number abounding in tunefulness and spirit, is an immense tribute to his individuality. Occasionally, it is true, he is a shade too serious, while here and there the smartness of the lyrics (notably those of Adrian Ross) has tempted him to dwell upon his themes at excessive length; but the ingenuity of it all is palpable, and the humour of the orchestration is in itself a treat for the cultivated listener. The two songs for Felice are charming, and they are sung with much *verve* by handsome Ilka Palmay. Miss Florence Perry and Mr. Charles Kenningham also sing admirably, besides contributing their share towards the success of the capital concerted music. It would take too long to dwell in detail upon the excellent performance and the superb *mise-*

en-scène of *His Majesty*. In these respects, at least, nothing better has been seen at the Savoy.

MARIANA.

A play, in Four Acts, by JOSE ECHEGARAY, translated by James Graham. Produced at the Court Theatre, February 22.

Daniel de Montoya	Mr. H. B. IRVING	Ramon	Mr. GEORGE BANCROFT
Don Felipe	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN	Dona Clara	Miss BEVERLY SITGREAVES
Don Pablo	Mr. EDWARD O'NEILL	Dona Luisa	Miss MARY KEEGAN
Don Castulo	Mr. JAMES WELCH	Claudia	Miss MABEL HACKNEY
Arturo	Mr. MARTIN HARVEY	Mariana	Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS

The name of José Echegaray is, or ought to be, familiar to readers of *The Theatre*, in the pages of which constant references to his work appeared long before his fame had spread beyond the confines of the Peninsula. At present Echegaray holds the position of leading dramatist in Spain. That he does so by right of conquest his marvellous fecundity and unquestionable ability fully attest. Author of some sixty plays, he has written nothing which does not demand attention by virtue of its cleverness and ingenuity. Unequal he certainly is, but even at his worst he stands a head and shoulders above the most famous of his contemporaries. Although in some respects a notable piece of work, *Mariana* can hardly be classed among its author's most successful efforts. It gives the impression of having been thought out and written at fever heat, while constructively it leaves something to be desired. As an example of drawing-room melodrama, the play, nevertheless, deserves high praise. The interest is seldom allowed to waver, while the skill shown by the writer in following one powerful situation by another even stronger is undoubted. The story can be related in a few lines. Daniel de Montoya, an impetuous youth, loves Mariana, who, however, is apparently undecided whether to bestow her hand upon him or upon an elderly admirer, Don Pablo. Finally she chooses Daniel. But at the very moment of doing so, she discovers that it was the young man's father who ruined her mother and brought dishonour on her family. Overwhelmed by the fact, she becomes Don Pablo's wife. Conscious that she still loves Daniel, she exacts from her husband a promise that should he ever find her straying from the path of honour he will kill her without compunction. This he pledges himself to do. The expected moment arrives. Daniel forces his way into Don Pablo's house, and endeavours to persuade Mariana to fly with him. Recognising her feebleness, she falls back upon the only resource left, calls in her husband, and bids him shoot her. Without an

instant's hesitation he carries out his promise, while the two men go off to finish the tragedy elsewhere. Such a piece evidently requires the best and most powerful acting. Miss Robins is essentially an intellectual actress, while Mariana is a type of the woman in whom are embodied all the animal passions. Mr. H. B. Irving's performance was a most admirable one, but at present he has scarcely the experience to give a thoroughly satisfactory account of so long and arduous a part as that of Daniel. Mr. Edward O'Neill made a dignified and impressive Don Pablo, and the remaining characters, all more or less sketchy, were in adequate hands.

A BIT OF OLD CHELSEA.

A Play, in One Act, by MRS. OSCAR BERINGER. Produced at the Court Theatre, February 9.

Jack Hillier	Mr. EDMUND MAURICE	Paul Raymond	Mr. COSMO HAMILTON
Phil McDonnell	Mr. MARTIN HARVEY	Alexandra Victoria Belchamber	
Jim Dixon	Mr. E. W. TARVER		Miss ANNIE HUGHES

In *A Bit of Old Chelsea*, Mrs. Oscar Beringer has written an exceedingly clever little play which would deserve unqualified praise were it not for the slight taint of unpleasantness that clings to it. This is the more to be regretted, inasmuch as there is no apparent necessity for the introduction of the element in question. On the other hand, the authoress shows a genuine power of observation; her character-drawing is excellent, and her dialogue pointed. Two nights before his marriage, Jack Hillier, sarcastically named *The Saint*, is found alone in his studio destroying the relics of past amours. Suddenly, casting a glance out of the window he discovers a common flower-girl on the steps, and, after some hesitation, brings her indoors. It is two o'clock in the morning, the weather is bleak and wintry, and when he has warmed and fed the stranger he recognises the cruelty of turning her into the street again. The girl, moreover, is of so innocent a cast of mind that she sees no irregularity in sharing the room with him. Eventually he places her in his own bed, resisting, although obviously not without an effort, the temptation even of kissing her. Hardly have the curtains been drawn when a band of tipsy comrades burst in upon him, and discovering his secret, place their own interpretation upon it. A scrimmage ensues, ending in the ignominious retreat of the invaders. Jack Hillier then stretches himself upon a sofa, but before going off to sleep informs "*Saucers*," as she is called, of his approaching marriage. The girl has already fallen in love with her protector. Realising, however, the true state of matters

she steals away as the dawn begins to break into the room. Miss Annie Hughes's impersonation of "Saucers" was a masterpiece of realism. Nothing more satisfactory could be conceived, while Mr. Edmund Maurice gave a clever portrait of Jack Hillier. *A Bit of Old Chelsea* was presented by way of prelude to the revival of *Sweet Nancy*.

MY FRIEND THE PRINCE.

A New Play, in Three Acts, suggested by the American Farce, *My Friend from India*, by JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY. Produced at the Garrick Theatre, February 18.

Prince Maurice of Pannonia	Mr. PERCY LYNDAL	Princess Brunhilde of Pannonia	Miss MARIAM CLEMENTS
The Hon. Peto Godolphin	Mr. PAUL ARTHUR	Poppy Jannaway	Miss SYBIL CARLISLE
Matthew Jannaway	Mr. FRED KAYE	Fansy Jannaway	Miss BLANCHE MASSEY
Pink Jannaway	Mr. AUBREY BOUCICAULT	Bennett	Miss TOBY CLAUDE
Baron Hertzein	Mr. HERBERT ROSS	Mlle. Gilberte Picard	Miss JULIETTE NESVILLE
Shottory	Mr. E. DAGNALL		
Ambrose Pinning	Mr. JAMES WELCH		

Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy deserves all praise for the dexterous manner in which he has contrived to fashion a high-class comedy out of a commonplace, boisterous farce. Here and there, it may be admitted, he has found it impossible to shake the dust of the original off his feet, but considered as a whole, *My Friend the Prince* is an excellent piece of work. Brightly and wittily written, it only requires a little compression in the second act to be thoroughly successful. The story contains a touch of fantasy which brings it into line with the novels of Mr. Anthony Hope. By the introduction of this element the author not only establishes his claim to a certain measure of extravagance in the treatment of his piece, but also obtains for it some exceedingly pretty pictorial effects. Prince Maurice of Pannonia, although married to the beautiful Princess Brunhilde, has fallen in love with a charming opera singer, Gilberte Picard. Adopting the name of Mr. Smith, he follows her to London, and in order to be near his enchantress becomes the private secretary of Mr. Matthew Jannaway, a vulgar upstart, at whose house Gilberte is a constant visitor. Meanwhile, Jannaway's son, Pink, has brought home a chance acquaintance, the Hon. Peto Godolphin, whom he introduces to his tuft-hunting father as the missing Prince. Godolphin, having become enamoured of Pink's sister, Poppy, refuses to forego the advantage the situation affords him. Thereupon, Pink, with the view of ridding himself of the monster he has conjured up, persuades Ambrose Pinning, a timid barrister, to appear as the real Prince, and so turn the tables on Godolphin. At this point the Princess Brunhilde arrives on the scene in pursuit of her recreant husband, only to be confronted with Godolphin, whom, of course, she fails to recognise. The imbroglio thus created gives rise to a

number of exceedingly droll situations, and is in the end solved by the return of the Prince to his rightful allegiance, and the pairing off of the several couples. Although a somewhat brisker and more spirited interpretation might in some instances have been desired, the performance was throughout excellent. As Godolphin, Mr. Paul Arthur revealed a vein of genuine comedy. His manner is quiet, but he possesses the art of holding a situation without effort and of delivering his lines with the utmost point. Mr. Arthur is a welcome and delightful addition to our somewhat scanty stock of comedy actors. Mr. Percy Lyndal gave a pleasing portrait of the Prince, and Mr. Fred Kaye a rather aggressively boisterous sketch of Mr. Jannaway. Miss Miriam Clements made a handsome Princess, although a trick of dropping her voice at the end of each sentence somewhat marred the effect of her performance, and Miss Juliette Nesville a dainty Gilberte, while Miss Sybil Carlisle acted with captivating freshness as Poppy Jannaway.

THE PRODIGAL FATHER.

An Extravagant Farce in Three Acts, by GLEN MACDONOUGH. Produced at the Strand Theatre, February 1.

Dodge	Mr. HARRY PAULTON	Smile	Mr. C. GARTH
Catesby Duff ..	Mr. CHARLES COLLETTE	Kate	MISS MAY PALFREY
Tom Breeze ..	Mr. CHARLES WEIR	Birdikins ..	MISS LULU VALLI
Smith	Mr. WILLIAM HARGREAVES	Dollie Bond ..	MISS FLORENCE GERARD
Percy Dodge ..	Mr. ALEX. BRADLEY		

There is no gainsaying the extravagance of Mr. Macdonough's farce. With those who deem that quality a virtue, the piece will no doubt find favour. For ourselves we confess to a liking for at least a slight measure of sanity and rationality in the matter of amusement. But as the question of taste proverbially stands outside argument, let us admit that the first performance of *The Prodigal Father* evoked shouts of laughter from a large proportion of the audience assembled to witness it. Doubtless, therefore, the piece is funny, although we sorrowfully confess our inability to find it so. The plot, briefly sketched, deals with the adventures of a Mr. Dodge, who, taking advantage of a pretended journey to Central Africa, follows a music-hall artiste, named Dollie Bond, through the provinces, the while pressing his attentions upon her. Dollie, however, is obdurate, and, returning home, Dodge is forced to exert his ingenuity to answer the many disconcerting questions put to him regarding his sojourn in Africa. Finding his daughter Kate in love with a young fellow named Tom Breeze, of whom he disapproves, Dodge asserts that he has already promised the girl's hand to the King of the Wamwams. Presently it appears that his son Percy, fresh from

Oxford, has also encountered Dollie Bond, and has not hesitated to make her his wife. Dollie follows her youthful husband to his father's house, and is there brought face to face with the elder Dodge, whose secret she threatens to disclose should he turn disagreeable. Meantime, Tom Breeze, suspecting the truth of his prospective father-in-law's statements, takes his departure, to return speedily disguised as the King of the Wamwams, and in that capacity to demand Kate's hand. Finding resistance useless, Dodge capitulates, and as Dollie Bond's previous husband, supposed to be dead, conveniently turns up at the same moment, everything ends happily for all concerned. The extravagance of the story is not redeemed by any delicacy of treatment, the last act in particular degenerating into pure buffoonery. Mr. Harry Paulton was, after his accustomed fashion, drily humorous as Dodge, and Miss Florence Gerard, returning to the stage after a lengthy absence, proved as Dollie that she still retains her title to rank as a useful comedy actress. Mr. Charles Collette was really amusing as Catesby Duff, Dollie's long lost husband, Miss May Palfrey played charmingly as Kate, and Mr. Alex. Bradley revealed distinct comic powers as Percy. *The Prodigal Father* was preceded by *A Merry Christmas* a new, but rather feeble, version of the French comedietta, *Je Dine chez ma Mère*.

IN PARIS.

Spiritisme, a comedy in three acts, by M. Victorien Sardou, has been produced with great success at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. Spiritualism, as the title shows, forms the basis of the play, and the thrill of the supernatural adds a new feature to time-worn emotions. With materials so congenial to her talent, Mme. Sarah Bernhardt could not fail to create a part worthy of her powers. The passionate, impulsive, imaginative girl, Simone, is married young to d'Aubenas, who yields himself wholly to the fascination of spiritualistic research. Piqued and wounded by this absorption of her husband, Simone yields to the seductions of one Stourdza. Supposed by her husband to have started for Brittany with her friend Thekla, she leaves this latter at the station, and returns secretly to Stourdza's house, helped in her plot by Thekla, who incidentally takes charge of a jewel-case bearing Simone's initials. The train catches fire, all lives are lost. A woman's body, unrecognizable, but holding the jewel-case, is found. All thus combines to enable Simone to hide her intrigue. To confirm by silence her reported death and

to throw her fate into her lover's hands is her impulse; but Stourdza's "love in idleness" fails when put to the test. Simone dead, her fortune dies too, and he hesitates. Simone dismisses him, and Valentin, her faithful friend and cousin, becomes the *deus ex machina* of the piece. He works on d'Aubenas' spiritualistic belief, and incites him to call up the spirit of his dead wife. At night, in the moonlight, Simone appears at his call, confesses her fault, and, on hearing his cry that he would gladly pardon all, reveals herself as alive. M. Sardou's master-hand maintains the interest of the play throughout, leading up to a genuine climax in the final reconciliation. The play has no bias either for or against Spiritualism. M. Sardou has used one of the questions of the day to enhance his plot, and that is all.

The two proverbs—*Mieux vaut Douceur . . . et Violence*, presented as contrasts by M. Edmond Pailleron at the Comédie Française, were admirably played and staged; but the matter itself is remarkable by its lack of striking impression or point. The only lesson the play could convey was the incidental one, exquisitely given by Mlle. Brandès, in her rôle of peacemaker in . . . *et violence*—namely, that neither coaxing nor violence is a dignified domestic weapon; but there is another attitude, of calm judgment, mingled with sympathy for human error, which is as free from vain concessions as from mean suspicion and anger—and this lesson was presented by her with a grace and power needing no comment. M. Georges Berr's versatile acting in *Mieux vaut Douceur* would have saved the play had it been possible; but the whole atmosphere was impregnated with a sentiment as bourgeois and distasteful as it is astonishing in a piece by the author of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*.

At the Comédie Française, *La Loi de l'Homme*, comedy in three acts, by M. Paul Hervieu, might have been entitled "the woman's question," as it once more illustrates the injustice of most human laws, for breaches of which the woman pays. Laure de Raguais, on discovering the treachery of her husband and her friend, Mme. d'Orcieu, cries, "The law, the world, all is against me; but I will defend myself alone, like a wounded animal, with my claws." Baffled by her husband's cool cynicism, she reaches the climax of her misery by discovering that her daughter, Isabel, and the son of Mme. d'Orcieu have fallen in love with each other, and that her husband shamelessly insists on their marriage. To wean her daughter from her love for André, Mme. de Raguais reveals to her that André's mother is her father's mistress. Here, again, she fails; the girl clings to her lover, and she is reduced to the last expedient of exposing all to M. d'Orcieu. D'Orcieu, maddened by the revelation, revenges

himself on his innocent informant, and to save himself from the world's ridicule, insists on total silence, and concealment of the whole scandal, and the marriage is decided. The mother, beaten on all sides, is forced to submit. Mme. Bartel interprets powerfully the rôle of Laure de Raguais, and is ably supported by M. Le Bargo as M. de Raguais and by M. Leloir as M. d'Orcieu.

At the Théâtre d'Auditions, the motive of *Le Flirt*, by M. Albert Clairouin, a comedy in three acts, is an obvious moral on a certainly not original theme. That flirtation has its possible or probable dangers is a fact long since proved by experience. This fact is presented without much novelty in the way of incident. We are not even spared the introduction of the inevitable bicycle whose wheels seem nowadays to "make the world go round." The two heroines of the piece, one a wife, the other unmarried, divide their energies between their cycles and their flirtations, or rather, combine both exercises, with results disastrous to all concerned. The young lady plays the game of flirtation, and ends in burning her own fingers in the flame she has lighted for a mere pastime; her intended victim extricating himself gracefully, and, to her despair, announcing his marriage with another girl. The matron's fiasco (so unsparingly moral is the play) is even worse; her brother, a too zealous young reformer—just returned from Tonkin—discovers her in what he judges to be a compromising situation with her admirer. We then have the familiar challenge; the duel; the discovery by the husband; the well-known recriminations and the ruined domestic happiness, which has been a foregone conclusion all through the piece. All indeed is ruin, and the only touch wanting to complete the general chaos and disaster is supplied by the fact that Henri, the brother, was himself destined by all concerned to be the husband of Mlle. Hélène, had not flirtation stepped in as a nineteenth century Nemesis to take a general revenge on guilty and innocent alike. And so, on a stage strewn with broken hearts, the curtain falls on a play surely as rigidly moral as any Surrey-side melodrama.

Le Chemineau, in five acts, and in verse, by M. Richepin, at the Odéon, is the story of a peasant vagabond to whom freedom is dearer than comfort, one of those happy-go-lucky characters who use the *argot* which the author knows and handles so well. The vagabond (M. Decori) is the casual father of a boy who at the marriageable age is refused as a bastard by the father of the girl. He turns up at the propitious moment and puts this and other things right, but he will not part with his freedom, and resumes his wanderings when the day's work

is done. The piece is a study of original character, and Richepin's verse is enough to secure success.

At the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, M. Lugné-Poë continued his representations of foreign masterpieces with the second part of Bjørnsen's *Au de la des Forces*. In the first part a physiological miracle seemed to be worked, but it cost the worker and the subject, even when faith came, their lives. In this second part the author's idea seems to be the hopelessness of human ideals to solve the social problem of capital and labour. The doubting Elias has become an anarchist, and blows up the capitalists with himself; but things remain as before, and a miracle as less possible than in the first act. The presentation and acting did the Œuvre great credit.

IN GERMANY.

François de Curel's *L'Invitée* has been brought out at the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, under the title of *Die Wiederkehr* (*The Return*). The public was at a loss at the beginning as to how it should greet this mixture of witty earnestness and light dramatic art; but the last act was decisive, and the curtain fell on the greatest success of the Berlin season. Anna von Grécourt (Fräulein Dumont) is an attractive woman of forty years of age. Sixteen years before the time when the incidents of the play are supposed to occur she left her husband, whom she loved, having detected him in an infidelity. She has since lived in Vienna alone. One day a message from her Hubert disturbs her solitude. She learns that her husband attributed her disappearance to a sudden access of madness occasioned by pique and jealousy; that he has since consoled himself with a widow of doubtful character, has even made her the friend and confidant of his two daughters; and that these girls, Anna's almost forgotten children, are running serious moral risks by reason of this undesirable companionship. She suddenly resolves to obey her husband's call, and go back to her daughters. The girls have undergone no real injury at present, and they passionately hail their mother as their saviour and friend. Hubert, whom she once adored, has become an elderly fool; he feels that the widow is a kind of fetter to him, that he will never be happy with her; but nevertheless he makes up his mind to adhere to his plan of handing over the daughters, about whose welfare he is uneasy, to their mother, while he continues his old relations with the widow, whom he intends to marry when a divorce has been obtained. At first Anna refuses. In the sad loneliness of her life in Vienna she has hardened her

heart, and she fancies that she no longer loves her children. The prayers of these unhappy creatures can induce neither father nor mother to yield. At length, however, the mother's love proves stronger than her resentment; Anna takes her daughters with her to Vienna, and leaves the husband to the widow, who, it is easy to see, will certainly betray him before long.

The Theater des Westens has produced Philippi's drama, *Der Dornenweg*, with success, and the Theater unter den Linden has brought *Gillette von Narbonne* out of the somewhat antiquated repertory of light opera, to the delight of the audience which filled the house. At the Berliner Theater, *Die Weisheit der Aspasia*, a drama in one act by M. Löbel, and *Spitzbubenstreiche* (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*), by Molière, translated and adapted for the German stage by Georg Dröschner, have been produced. The first of the two pieces does not call for further mention; the second was well acted, but is hardly the kind of thing to appeal to present-day German audiences.

Trilby, a drama in five acts, adapted by Georg Odonkowsky, from the novel by Du Maurier, has been given at the Thalia Theatre. The smartest set in Berlin was present at the first performance, which took place at a *matinée*, and there was probably not an actress of all those who saw the piece but envied Fräulein Emmy Neumann the privilege of having played *Trilby* for the first time. There can be no doubt that the piece will have a most successful run in the provinces, but in its German dress it can hardly be said to be quite worthy of one of the best theatres in Berlin. The German version is too bold to be a really good dramatic work. In spite of some drawbacks, however, the piece was very successful, and the acting was good.

M. Antoine has taken to Berlin for the second time a troupe of French actors. This time he has not gone as the manager of a *théâtre libre*, but as a member of a company called Marcel Josset's Company, after the leading lady. The company began at the Lessing Theatre with Maurice Donnay's piece, *Les Amants*, followed by Becque's *La Parisienne*, Sardou's *Marcelle*, and numerous other plays. In attending French plays in Germany there is one piece of advice which Germans need to remember and to act upon, and it is embodied in the saying, *surtout pas trop de zèle*—the maxim formerly impressed upon young diplomatists. So long as a Frenchman or Frenchwoman, travelling either for pleasure or business, does not expressly demand the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, the Germans will find them fascinating. This little peculiarity even makes its way into their dramatic criticism.

John Gabriel Borkman, Ibsen's latest play, was produced fo-

the first time in Germany at the Stadt Theater, Frankfurt-on-the-Main. It was there received with great favour, which was equalled when it was performed at the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin. Among other recent plays performed in the capital must be mentioned *Der Schuss*, by Henry Presver, and *Mutterrechte*, by A. Weber, at the Berliner Theatre, *Junge Ehe*, by P. A. Kirstein, at the Residenz Theatre, and *Von der Ehe*, by Hans L'Arronge, at the Lessing Theatre.

Ewige Liebe (Eternal Love), by Hermann Faber, which has been produced at the Dresden Court Theatre, is an interesting play in three acts. The author was already known in Germany by his pieces, *Der freie Wille*, *Die goldene Lüge*, and *Hans der Träumer*. Although these works enjoyed no lasting success, they left on the public the impression that the author was a man from whom better things might be expected, and that impression proves to-day to be a just one. The story is briefly this. A young professor—Walter Schubart by name—has fallen in love in his boyish days with a girl named Martha Dornach, to whom he has sworn eternal love, after the fashion of an enthusiastic boy meeting with a charming girl and realising for the first time the attractions of the opposite sex. He goes away from his provincial home to the university, and while there receives the offer of a fairly good position in his native town. Everyone imagines that he will seize the opportunity of settling down as a respectable middle-class young man should do. This, however, he declines to do, because he has fallen in love with a bewitching young lady violinist, and believes his love to be reciprocated. He attempts to get out of his difficulty by prevarication. He says he is ill, and cannot return to his relations at present. Meanwhile, Clara Spohr, the violinist, advises him not to go back to a woman he does not love. Walter cannot prevail upon her to say she will marry him herself, however, and is madly jealous when his enchantress achieves a great and unexpected triumph on the concert stage. She is invited and accepts an invitation to a banquet organized in her honour; her lover thinks she should be content to share this triumph with him alone, and refuses to accept her invitation to be present at the banquet. Now Martha comes on the scene. She arrives with her sister and her sister's husband, and the mystery is soon cleared up. Martha's relations endeavour to persuade the young man to abandon Clara and to fulfil his promise, and Walter even goes so far as to ask Martha to set him free so that he may marry the woman he loves. The girl's pride is deeply wounded, and she tells him flatly that she will not set him free. "If you want to break your word you can do so," she cries out to him. In the end Walter does not marry Clara, who

wishes for an independent life as an artist. She does not love him, though she feels sympathy and friendship for him, and he refrains from pressing her to be his wife, knowing from his experience with Martha that one may swear eternal fidelity, but that one cannot swear eternal love. There is some excellent characterisation in *Eternal Love*, the scenes in which musical artists are introduced being especially clever and lifelike. The play held the closest attention of the audience until the very end.

A new piece, by Humperdinck, whose *Hänsel und Gretel* has been so successful throughout Europe, is an event of no slight importance in the world of dramatic music. The fairy tale *Children of the King*, by Ernst Rosner, with music by Humperdinck, has been brought out during the last month at the Court Theatre, Munich. A young prince, who is not satisfied with having been born to a throne, but wishes to earn his crown by fighting and brave deeds, sets out on an adventurous journey through the world. In the course of his wanderings he comes across a maiden minding a flock of geese, and, notwithstanding her poverty, he recognizes in her an equal in feeling and thought, a true king's child. Under a lime-tree he woos her. With joy in his heart he makes his way to the town, in order to show his newly-won bride to his people; but he is taken for an impostor, and the pair are driven out of the gates by the populace. They wander into the forest, humiliated, and there, under the same lime-tree which saw the blossoming of their love, a snowstorm ends their life. The author has succeeded in giving to this fairy tale a charming dress, and it is in many parts very dramatic as well as very moving. Humperdinck has written music worthy of his reputation, and, if the verdict of the first night audience may be trusted, *The Children of the King* will be a great success. At the conclusion of the last act no one left the theatre until the composer had repeatedly appeared with the lady who writes under the *nom-de-plume* of Ernst Rosner, but whose real name is Mme. Else Bernstein, to receive the congratulations of the audience.

IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

The month has not been a very eventful one in Vienna. At the Deutsches Volkstheater has been brought out *Das Grobe Hemd* (*The Rough Shirt*), an excellent play by C. Karlweis, who won the first prize at the Rainund Theatre. The leading idea is not altogether original; but it has been treated in an admir-

able manner. A working man, who, by his talents and industry has become rich, is reproached with his riches by his own son, of all people in the world. This young man, who has never known anything but comfort and luxury, embraces socialistic ideas, prates about the rights of labour, and generally conducts himself as a prig of the first water. His father, in order to cure him, suddenly announces that he has become penniless, reverts to the style of living to which he was accustomed as an artisan, and leaves his son to make the best of the new conditions. It is not very long before "the rough shirt" proves intolerably galling to the son, who endeavours to escape from the lot of those in whom he formerly took a sentimental interest, and strives to become rich in his turn. He is extremely pleased, and much more sensible, when, in due course, after having been tried and found wanting, he is restored by his shrewd father to happier conditions.

Trilby was brought out at the beginning of February at the Carl Theatre, and was very kindly received. *The Shop Girl* has made her appearance at the Theater in der Josephstadt under the name of *Die Ladenmamsell*. The piece excited unbridled enthusiasm throughout. Yet a third English production must be mentioned. At the Theater an der Wien *The Little Weather-house*, which was so successful when it was performed in Berlin recently, has been no less happy in its appeal to Viennese audiences, and is attracting considerable attention. Ibsen's *Wildduck* was not received with unqualified applause on its recent production at the Burg Theater, yet after each act the manager was called before the curtain to thank the public in the author's name.

At the Raimund Theatre Carl Morre, the popular author of *Nullerl*, has had a new play produced. It is called *Der Glückseliger*, and partakes of the nature of a farce. The leading character, a widower of sixty-six years of age, is misled into playing pranks unbecoming one of his years and presumed experience. He fancies himself the happiest of mortals when he receives the assurance of a maiden's love; but he has to undergo many a disillusionment, until at last his eyes are opened, and he is cured of his folly.

A French company, of which Mme. Magnier is the most prominent figure, has been playing at the Carl Theatre in Meilhac and Halévy's *La Petite Marquise*, and other pieces.

At Prague Gerhart Hauptmann's very clever fairy drama *Die Versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell*), has been given for the first time. The first four acts were received with the utmost favour, but the last somewhat failed of its intended effect.

Nevertheless, the applause was long and loud at the end, and the manager of the theatre was summoned to receive congratulations in the author's name.

At Buda-Pest a charming ballet called *Die Rothen Schuhe* (*The Red Shoes*), has been brought out at the Opera, and received with a cordiality which has been extended to no ballet since *Excelsior* was produced. The arrangement of the dances, groupings, and scenic effects is the work of Herr Hassreiter; the music is by Herr Raoul Mader. One of the most beautiful of the dances is called the "Rose Walz," and while it is in progress the perfume of white rose is wafted through the auditorium. This, and one or two other dances, are unanimously declared to be more lovely than anything ever seen on the stage in Buda-Pest.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

Il Poeta, a new dramatic work by Signor Gerolamo Rovetta, which was produced on February 6th, at the Teatro Manzoni, Milan, is a vigorous opening attack in a revolt which undoubtedly merits a happier issue than it has attained. The being who has aroused the indignation of the talented author of *Lagrima del Prossimo* is the typical verse-writer of the day, who lays claim to the dignity of a poet, but whose productions exhibit an artificiality, and an outrageous disregard of morality, which proclaim not only an ignorance of real poetic conception, but also an entire lack of originality. Signor Rovetta makes war upon this century-end monstrosity by means of the caustic gift of satire which he has already brought to bear in other quarters with marked effect. The two chief characters of the plot, between whom the author obviously aims at setting up an instructive contrast, are Paolo Sardi, a mere maker of verses, and Giovanni Vandoni, a healthy-minded and hard-working man, whose conceptions of poetry are based upon feelings of humanity and affection for his fellow-creatures. Vandoni, taking pity upon the destitute condition of Sardi, supplies him with the means of improving his education, and Sardi, in place of any manifestation of gratitude, seeks to entice Giulia, his benefactor's sister, away from her husband, and at the same time succeeds in appropriating the affections of Anna Förstel, a young woman who is engaged to Vandoni. This mischief is not, however, enough for the ungrateful Sardi, for he also brings about the disgrace of an artless servant-girl, who, learning the extent of his villainy, attempts her life with poison. Matters

are then brought to a climax, and Sardi is ignominiously bundled out of the house. With this simple plot Signor Rovetta hoped to achieve the end which he had in view; but no method of looking at the cold, stubborn facts can establish for him a claim to success. The earlier scenes of the play met with a tolerably good reception; but before the curtain fell on the final act it was evident that if the author is to succeed in enlisting the sympathy of an audience of his countrymen in the cause which he has taken up—to allow, for the moment, that such a cause can be fought on the stage—he must try again with something of a more subtle character. The chief theatrical event of the month at Rome was the production of Signor Giordano's opera *Andrea Chenier* at the Teatro Argentina. The leading parts were played by Signor Scotti, Signor Borgatti, and Signora Carrera, and the reception of the opera was most enthusiastic.

IN MADRID.

Few theatrical works have had their first appearance heralded by so much preliminary speculation as it has been the lot of Señor Mariano Vela to arouse by the announcement of his comedy with the title of *Don Quijote de Madrid*. Many strange rumours got afloat respecting the daring character of the plot, but they all had the one basis of belief that Señor Vela was engaged on the production of a work which would constitute a sensational commentary on the municipal scandals which startled Madrid about twelve months ago. Added to this came the whisper that an exalted member of Madrid society was to be held up to ridicule in the new play. Interest was therefore keen by the time *Don Quijote de Madrid* was announced to appear at the Teatro de la Comedia. The curtain had not been up long, however, before it became evident that rumour had considerably overstepped the verge of fact. The only apparent ground upon which any comparison could be made between the particular episodes in the Madrid scandals and the plot of the new comedy lies in the fact that the subject of administrative morality holds a prominent position in both stories. The scene of the first two acts is laid on the terrace of a casino, and the play opens with the discovery of a small knot of persons engaged in discussing a somewhat shady transaction relative to the concession of an irrigation canal for which the consent of Don Santiago Torres, the Director of Public Works, is necessary. Don Santiago happens to be spending the summer with his wife and his daughter Pilar, at that very place, and there is also

among the visitors an official whose son is engaged to be married to the beautiful Pilar. The result of the discussion of the canal scheme is an attempt, through the medium of a handsome widow, to bribe Don Santiago, with a share of the profits, to agree to any plans which may be laid before him ; but the only effect of the proposal is to arouse Don Santiago's righteous indignation. In revenge for their rebuff, the schemers dub the upright minister "Don Quixote of Madrid," and invent a number of stories reflecting upon the behaviour of his wife with the before-mentioned official, hoping by that means to drive him into retirement. On hearing the calumnies respecting his wife, Don Santiago has a strong interview with her supposed lover, and breaks off the engagement between the young people. He departs, however, on good terms with his wife, and intends to settle down quietly in private life, but is followed by the guiltless official and eventually persuaded to withdraw his refusal to their children's marriage. Thus, rather tamely and with a suggestion of incompleteness, the work ends. It is written in verse of a passable quality, and was well received. *La Calumnia por Castigo*, a new drama by Señor Echegaray, proved, on its production at the Teatro Español, to be very far below the standard of the eminent author's preceding works. Señor Echegaray had, indeed, to endure the mortification of scoring a failure.

IN NEW YORK.

Mr. John Hare, at the Knickerbocker Theatre, is still the most potent attraction in the city. His Benjamin Goldfinch has been at least as well received as on his previous visit, and his production of *Caste* has received unstinted praise. While recognising to the full the artistic intention and the masterly execution which mark Mr. Hare's presentation of *Eccles*, a large majority are clearly of opinion that the actor has departed somewhat from the author's conception of the character. It has been suggested that he should alternate the parts of Gerridge and *Eccles*, giving the latter to Mr. Charles Groves ; but excellent as the arrangement would doubtless prove, it does not seem to have found favour. At the Garden Theatre, *Heartsease*, a romantic comedy by Mr. Charles Klein and Mr. J. I. C. Clarke, is enjoying a long term of public favour. It is a story of the last century, and has the same fascinating atmosphere as that which rendered *Rosemary* so successful, but has a melodramatic plot that robs it of a good deal of its charm. The score of an opera is stolen, and while the composer is suffering from brain

fever, preparations are made for the production of the work, the name of the thief of course taking the place of that of the unfortunate hero as author. Mr. Henry Miller speaks the telling sentences of the part of the musician with effect. Miss Grace Kimball, as the heroine, was, as is usual, all that could be wished. Professor Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*, produced at the Broadway with the original cast, promises to be even more successful here than in London. *The First Gentleman in Europe*, by Mrs. Hodgson Burnet and "George Fleming," tells effectively in three acts an incident in the early life of George IV. The foundation of the story is taken from the discursive and not always veracious memoirs of Robert Huish. The Prince of Wales, assuming the description of an ordinary colonel, begins an amorous intrigue, which ends by his giving place to the honourable lover of the girl in question. If this is to be found in Huish we fear it must be accounted as one of his lapses. Mr. J. K. Hackett, excellently made up, accented all the vigour and recklessness which characterised the original. *Cymbeline*, with Miss Margaret Mather as Imogen, Mr. William Courtleigh as Leonatus, and that excellent character-actor, Mr. E. J. Henley, who has not quite recovered from a total loss of voice, as Iachimo, has enjoyed a moderate degree of favour at Wallack's. *The Woman in Black*, a melodrama of politics and the shady side of New York life, promises well at the Columbia. Mr. Chauncey Olcott, in his new play, by Mr. Augustus Pitou, *Sweet Inniscarra*, finds scope for his unrivalled genius in the portrayal of Irish character. At the American and the Academy Theatres two melodramas, *New York*, and Messrs. Vane and Shirley's *Straight from the Heart*, are markedly popular. At the Star Theatre two plays have just been produced. *A Boy Wanted* was the first, a musical farce of the nondescript order, but vastly entertaining owing to the tireless efforts at laughter-making of Mr. Henry Clay Blaney. This was succeeded by *Cuba's Vow*, a melodrama founded upon recent events, which has given rise to much popular enthusiasm in the cause of the Cubans. Mr. Daly has revived *The Magistrate*, with Miss Rehan in her old part of Agatha Posket. Mr. James Lewis was the original exponent of Posket here; his death leaves a sad gap, especially noticeable from the unsuccessful attempts of his successor. Mr. F. Marion Crawford's novel, *Dr. Claudius*, has been dramatised for the brothers Holland, who show to all their customary advantage as the Doctor and Silas Barker. The story is well told in a prelude and four acts, and bids fair to become as successful as the recent dramatisation of other novels of to-day.

Echoes from the Green Room.

SIR HENRY IRVING, happily restored to health, reappears as Richard III. on February 27th.

MISS ELLEN TERRY having, in consequence of an attack of influenza, been advised to take a rest, the production of *Madame Sans-Gêne* has been postponed for a few weeks.

Olivia was revived at the Lyceum last month, with Miss Ellen Terry, of course, as the heroine—one of her most delightful impersonations—and Mr. Hermann Vezin, almost equally as a matter of course in the absence of Sir Henry Irving, as the good Vicar.

MORE tributes from Paris to the excellence of the English stage, the very existence of which, as we said last month, is usually doubted by the average Frenchman. M. Jules Claretie, the manager of the Comédie Française, has been discussing in the *Temps* an idea of bringing German players to the capital. He speaks in high terms of the Meiningen players, but would evidently prefer to have Sir Henry Irving—"this very eminent tragedian, this admirable manager as well as erudite artist, inspired by a scrupulous love of his profession and by a fidelity to his conscience at once liberal and bold." Then, again, this "regenerator of the English theatre would be accompanied by Miss Ellen Terry, 'sa partenaire exquise.' Had the proposed troupe from Germany the solidity and the *qualité* of the Lyceum?"

IN spite of prevailing commercial depression, Mr. Willard's American tour is proving successful. Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Washington, and Pittsburg have echoed the favourable verdict of New York as to *The Rogue's Comedy*.

MME. MELBA has been compelled by ill health to give up her engagement in New York, and has gone to the south of France. She emphatically contradicts some reports that she had had any difficulties with any of her comrades. In all probability she will be singing at Chicago in a few weeks.

HAPPILY married, the ever youthful M. Jean de Reszke, the ideal Faust and Siegfried, is at no pains to conceal his age. He admits that he came into this breathing world as far back as January 14, 1850.

MME. MODJESKA, who lately appeared at San Francisco, has so far recovered from her recent illness as to make arrangements for a long autumn tour in America.

MME. CALVE is getting on. M. Grau once denied her parts in which she wished to appear. Now that Madame Melba has left New York, he is anxious to oblige her.

MR. HARE has agreed with Mr. Charles Frohman to have an American tour of thirty weeks next season.

MR. TREE has returned to us from America. His new theatre is all but finished, and will probably be opened in the course of a few weeks.

MISS FANNY DAVENPORT will probably re-appear in London this season.

THE author of *Nelson's Enchantress* is Mrs. Lacy, daughter of Admiral Hornby.

MR. AND MRS. BANCROFT were among the guests at the usual dinner given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House to the masters of the City companies.

ON February 9th, at Stafford House, Mr. Bancroft brought to a close, but only for the present, his readings of *A Christmas Carol*—readings which, thanks in part to the refusal of the reader to allow any deduction on the score of expenses, have resulted in a substantial addition to the funds of charities in various parts of the country.

THE proverbial generosity of the theatrical profession has again been shown in the matter of the Indian famine. Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Bancroft, and Mr. Wyndham have liberally contributed to the relief fund, which is being aided by the receipts of special performances.

REHEARSALS of *The Princess and the Butterfly, or the Fantastics*, have been going on for a fortnight past at the St. James's Theatre, though Mr. Pinero's comedy is not likely to be produced until the end of the month. It contains thirty-two parts, and therefore needs plenty of rehearsal. That admirable actress, Miss Rose Leclercq, will return to Mr. Alexander's company for this piece, of which the production is awaited naturally with the greatest impatience and interest.

Soon after Mr. Pinero's new comedy has been produced at the St. James's we shall see Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's latest play at the Criterion. It is at present known as *The Physician*, a character to be impersonated by Mr. Wyndham, and is a piece of serious interest. *Change Alley*, the costume play, by Mr. Louis Parker and Mr. Murray Carson, will now probably be seen elsewhere. It was to have followed *Rosemary*, but Mr. Wyndham—wisely, as it will seem to most people—decided not to have two costume pieces together, and therefore, having secured Mr. H. A. Jones's drama, allowed his arrangement with Mr. Parker and Mr. Carson to lapse.

It is probable that there will be an autumn season of opera in English at Covent Garden.

AT the Globe, *Jedbury Junior*, when it has exhausted its popularity, will be succeeded by a revival of Mr. T. Gideon Warren's *Bonny Boy*, a very amusing play. New pieces by Mr. Jerome and Mr. Mark Ambient have been accepted here.

TWO Nelson plays in a month seems rather a large allowance, especially since our great naval hero has been allowed by the dramatists so long a rest. The rival to *Nelson's Enchantress* will be seen at the Olympic Theatre on the 9th inst., with Mr. Charles Glenney as the hero (presumably the victor of Trafalgar) and Mr. Abingdon as the villain. The authors are Mr. Robert Buchanan and Miss Harriet Jay, who prefers to be known to the public as "Charles Marlowe," under which name she has recently published a novel based on *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown*. The publisher, by the way, is none other than Mr. Buchanan, who collaborated with her in producing that amusing play.

ONCE more the Princess's Theatre has been put up to auction, and once more it has failed to find a purchaser willing to pay the price demanded for the remaining forty-three years' lease. A sum of £20,500 was offered, but the property was withdrawn upon the refusal of any bid higher than this. The ground rent is £1600 a year.

THERE is no danger of the drama failing to be well represented at the

Victorian Era Exhibition, which promises to be a great attraction this year at Earl's Court. The strong committee which has been formed met for the first time on February 16th, at the St. James's Theatre. Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Tree, Mr. Pinero, and Mr. G. R. Sims were present, Sir Henry Irving being unavoidably prevented from attending, and Mr. Imre Kiralfy, the general manager of the exhibition, explained that it was proposed to erect on the huge boards of the Empress Theatre seven stages of the ordinary size, on which set scenes could be shown. A gallery would be reserved for theatrical pictures and ample space provided for the exhibition of all kinds of stage mechanism, stage costumes, MSS., &c. It was agreed also that "the public should be shown a large set-scene, representing the complete working of the stage from behind the footlights." Altogether the dramatic section ought to be extremely interesting. Mr. Austin Brereton, the honorary secretary, is certainly sparing no pains to make it so.

IN the *North American Review*, Mr. Tree has advanced an earnest plea for the actor-manager, pointing out that a theatre so directed is likely to maintain a policy in which art has some place. He admits, however, that the ideal manager should not be an actor, but one in whom taste and judgment and commercial aptitude are equally blended. Experience has sufficiently proved that the former of these apparently contradictory positions is the more tenable. The ideal is fascinating enough, but what we have to deal with is solid fact. The *New York Mirror*, looking at the achievements of Sir Henry Irving and others, pertinently asks whether the American public would not be the gainer if several of their leading theatres were governed by gifted, ambitious, and practised players.

ADMIRAL FIELD is an admirable after-dinner speaker, but sometimes fails in judgment. As we have seen, he objects to the introduction of Nelson on the stage in association with Lady Hamilton. He has raised the question in the House of Commons, and will raise it again on the Estimates. It is strange to think that at this time of day the right of the dramatist to deal with any historic figure should be disputed.

UNLESS he has been misreported, Mr. Forbes Robertson is a little at sea in the matter of history. He is said to have said to a representative of the *Daily Mail*, "perhaps there is an objection to my utterance of Nelson's dying words, in which he committed to the care of his country the woman he had loved. The men who constituted the Government then were such arrant rascals that, while the king's mistresses were kept and fed and tenderly cared for, Lady Hamilton was allowed to languish and to perish." Was William Pitt, the Prime Minister, an "arrant rascal?" And who, we may ask, were the mistresses of that eminently virtuous George III.?

OUR article last month as to the "Onslaught upon the Player" has aroused widespread discussion. "It endeavours," the *Newcastle Daily News* says, "to criticise the social reaction, as indicated by the press, which has lately turned severely critical attention to the social position of actors and actresses and their alleged undue prominence in society. Whatever may be the meaning and the ethics of it, actors and actresses have in recent years enjoyed at least as much public notice as statesmen. Whether this be right or wrong, good or bad, complaints against it come with very bad grace from the journalists, who have been the main cause of bringing the players into such prominence. It is like inviting somebody to your house and taking advantage of his visit to abuse him. It is equally mean of society to tolerate the journalists in such peculiarly inhospitable and

ungraceful conduct, for was it not 'society' that got the players to come out and that insisted on the newspapers advertising them? Perhaps most of the abuse is issued by persons who are not equally successful from a social point of view, and who betray their unfitness for such success by petty envy of those who enjoy it. However this may be, the onslaught on the player has become strong and virulent. I have in my time met many players and I have the honour to count among my private friends more than one actress whose honour I should defend as I would my sister's because equally convinced of their integrity. What is more, I am most strongly convinced that some actresses at least are among the best and purest women that ever breathed. I know what they have done to protect and to defend themselves against the thousand degradations threatening the life of any girl following a public career, and knowing how they have come through these ordeals, I am bound to say that, in so far as I can judge, they have withstood something before which the average spotless lady of our drawing-rooms would have fallen irretrievably."

THE so-called "Armenian opera," which is at least in rehearsal at the Shaftesbury Theatre, has certainly not lacked advertisement. The dispute as to a song in the piece which the proprietors charged Mr. Seymour Hicks with plagiarising dragged on in the Law Courts for the best part of two months. It was a curious spectacle—that of a learned Chancery judge gravely considering whether there was any similarity between "You never see the same bird twice," and "She never did the same thing twice," and whether "A little bit of string" belonged to one party or the other. Mr. Justice North, by the way, in giving judgment, made an excursion into the region of musical criticism, declaring that the "bird" song seemed to him to be "contemptible and inane," and one, his lordship added, with dry humour, "not likely to be sung twice." Mr. John Lettay will have the principal part in the operetta.

WE gather that the musical profession will mark the Diamond Jubilee year of Queen Victoria by establishing an orphanage for the children of the less fortunate amongst them. An excellent suggestion has been made that the dramatic profession should in the same way create a Theatrical Charities' Fund. If the scheme now actually on foot for realising the project of an actors' orphanage can be carried into effect, and at the same time an amalgamation be effected of the funds which exist for the benefit of needy players, the year 1897 will be memorable in theatrical history for more reasons than one. Charity should, as the proverb has it, begin at home, and, while all credit is due to those generous managers who have contributed to the Indian Famine and the Prince of Wales's Hospital Funds, a special effort might well be put forth to secure due provision for all deserving members of the profession upon whom fortune has failed to smile.

"THE old Independent Theatre is dead: long live the new one!" This was the cry of the enthusiasts who gathered at the Court Theatre on February 22nd to see *Mariana*, the play by Senor Echegaray, with which Miss Robins began her venture. The idea is that the new society shall fulfil some, at any rate, of the functions of an endowed theatre. Authors, it is pointed out, have not sufficient encouragement to do the best work they are capable of, or, if they do this, they attract only a limited public, and their pieces are counted as failures. Plays submitted to the committee will be carefully read, and, if thought suitable for production, will be given a trial. Should they prove at all popular, they will be

transferred to a "long-run" theatre, and so presented to a wider public. *John Gabriel Borkman* is to be given at Easter, and *Admiral Guinea*, by Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Henley, in the autumn of this year. The preference is to be given to English rather than foreign plays, which is quite as it should be. The experiment will be watched with decided interest.

MR. EDWARD ROSE has been down with inflammation of the lungs, but is now, we are glad to say, himself again.

THE three performances of *Twelfth Night* which the Elizabethan Stage Society gave in the Middle Temple Hall attracted very large and distinguished audiences, including on the first night the Prince of Wales. The intrinsic interest of the production was added to by the fact that the play was performed in this hall during Shakspeare's lifetime, possibly under the poet's own direction, in 1601-2. The acting showed a vast improvement on that of the occasion when the society gave *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Merchant Taylors' Hall. Mr. Poël was a good Malvolio.

THE thirteenth yearly dinner of the Playgoers' Club, held on February 14th at the Hotel Cecil, under the presidency of the president, was, as usual, a great success. Mr. Wyndham, replying for the Drama, remarked that at no period in the history of the civilised world had it failed to exist in some form or another. Its power was beyond the need of argument; to speak of that influence would be as presumptuous as to hold a brief for humanity. The player and the playgoer were intertwined with each for all time, for good or for evil. Mr. Clement Scott spoke for the Press, dwelling upon its fairness, judicial quality, and culture, and especially upon the progress made by dramatic criticism during the last forty years.

THE old historic church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, was reopened on February 16th, after restorations so extensive that they have occupied seven years. The Prince of Wales and the Archbishop of Canterbury were present at the ceremony. Of all classes, it has been remarked, this church should be dearest to the heart of the actor. Shakspeare lived hard by, and his brother Edmond, "a player," was "buried in ye church with a forenoon knell of the Great Bell" in 1607. Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich, was elected a member of the Corporation of Wardens of the parish in 1610, and his father-in-law and colleague, Philip Henslowe, was buried in the church. Here, too, are the resting-places of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger.

MR. TREE seems hardly the right person to complain of the small rewards that theatrical managers can expect for their best efforts. He thinks that "public spirit finds expression in responsible and individual effort" may be trusted to supply the place of a national or state-subsidised theatre, and adds plaintively that if the pecuniary recompense is not always great, yet "the worker leaves behind something whose value cannot be appraised by the standard of the death duties." To judge by Mr. Tree's record, this savours a good deal of claptrap.

THE Rev. Francis Jacox, the Shakspearean student and commentator, died at his residence, St. John's-wood, on February 5th, aged seventy-one. His "Shakspeare Diversions," brought out in two series about twenty years ago, is in many respects a valuable work.

MR. CHARLES HARRIS, younger brother of the late Sir Augustus Harris, died early in February, at the age of forty-two. He was a singularly

capable stage-manager in the way of stage production, but had neglected his education too much to go further. He had a generous nature, not unfrequently concealed under a rough and unaccommodating manner.

MR. LOVEDAY, the stage manager at the Lyceum, has been presented with a costly and elegant service of silver by the company. Mr. Pinero made the presentation speech; he was once an actor at the same theatre, and at the Alexandra, Liverpool, over twenty years ago, Mr. Loveday taught him how to sing in pantomime. He bore high testimony to the recipient's gifts as a stage manager, and spoke of the Irving régime as the most brilliant chapter in the history of the English stage.

THE death is announced of Mr. Henry Betty, son of the "infant Roscius." Born in 1819, he was educated for the Church, but preferably went on the stage, with which he was connected until 1854. He inherited from his father a rather considerable fortune, a good deal of which he gave to the Royal General Theatrical Fund.

SIR HENRY IRVING takes the chair at the yearly dinner, to be held at the Hôtel Métropole in May, of the Royal Society of Musicians.

ANOTHER accident with weapons on the stage! How long will it be before proper care is taken to use swords and daggers that cannot inflict injuries, however unskilfully they may be handled? This time, fortunately, the consequences are not so serious as in the case at the Novelty Theatre in the summer. Mr. T. B. Thalberg, who was wounded by a sword-thrust in the thigh during the performance of *The Prisoner of Zenda* at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, has fortunately soon recovered of his injury; but a lesson should be learnt from what might have been a terrible accident—and yet one that could so easily be avoided.

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. Herman de Lange and Miss Annie Hill, who entered into the state of matrimony at the end of January.

MR. JOSEPH HATTON, in his charming *Cigarette Papers*, relates a story about Mr. D. E. Bandmann, formerly an Anglo-German actor, who, walking into the Savage Club, said that he had been paid £100 to leave Liverpool so as not to interfere with Mr. Barry Sullivan's engagement. "This is hard upon us," said Mr. Stephen Fiske; "but the emergency must be met. How much will Mr. Bandmann charge to leave London?"

MR. "MAX O'RELL," otherwise Mons. Paul Blouët, late French master at St. Paul's School, is about to leave the lecture platform, on which he has appeared for some time past with success, for the stage. He will play the principal part in his own piece, *On the Continent*, which begins a tour very shortly.

M. HALANZIER, formerly the director of the Paris Opéra, died early in the year at the age of seventy-eight.

MME. BERNHARDT has accepted a piece by Signor Gabriel d'Annanzio, the Italian novelist. It is called *La Ville Morte*, and the character to be represented by the great actress is blind.

NEXT May—and the fact is not without a particular significance—thirty representative German plays will be performed in Paris, Herr Lothar and Herr Bonn conducting the enterprise.

Is Paris becoming more cosmopolitan in its ideas? *Le Monde Artiste* suggests that Sir Henry Irving should play Hamlet and Mephistopheles there. It would be interesting to know whether he is disposed to act upon this "excellente idée."

SOMETHING has happened at the Comédie Française. An important part

in M. Paul Hervieu's *La Loi de l'Homme*, lately produced, was transferred at a late stage to Mlle. Renée du Mirvil. Mme. Antonia Laurent, to whom it was first given, has sent in her resignation, and is expected to go to the Porte Saint Martin.

M. LAVEDAN will shortly read to the committee of the Théâtre Français a comedy entitled *Catherine*.

M. DUPREZ's *Memoires d'un Chanteur* include a pathetic little sketch of Donizetti at the time when, after losing his mind, he became an inmate of the Asylum at Ivry. "I went to see him there. He could scarcely raise himself. I tried to get another gleam of his once great intelligence by talking to him of his country, the musical history of his time, and those works of his in which I had taken part. I sang to him some passages in his beloved *Lucie*. 'Wait,' he said; 'I will accompany you.' For a moment he seemed to have recovered from his terrible torpor. He sat down at a piano, but was unable to play. The old mindless expression had again come over his face."

MR. THOMAS BARCLAY, the correspondent of *The Theatre* in Paris, has been appointed vice-president of the British Chamber of Commerce in that city, where he has long practised as a lawyer. In 1900, the year of the next Paris Exhibition, he will be president.

THE revolving stage at the Royal Theatre, Munich, has recently been the subject of a magazine article, written by Herr Lautenschlager, the director. Not only is this invention useful in making it possible to change the scene with great rapidity, but, says Herr Lautenschläger, the stage manager can pay more attention to his "sets" by having them arranged at leisure during the day, instead of hurrying them through in the intervals. In the "majority of cases, the display of furniture, &c., can be richer, because it can remain the whole evening undisturbed, and does not need to be bundled away in a hurry. And since it is possible through the use of a revolving stage to reduce the pauses during which the curtain is down to the most trifling duration, the time can be devoted to the piece, and it will be possible to give a complete representation of many plays which hitherto could not be produced except with cuts."

ANTI-SEMITISM still prevails in Vienna. *Trilby* was lately played at the Carl Theatre, and the manager thought it expedient to turn Svengali from a Jew into an Hungarian bandmaster.

THE projected visit of a portion of the Comédie Française to Athens will not take place at present.

ACCORDING to Mme. Lillie Lehmann, the performances at Bayreuth show a marked change for the worse. "Frau Cosima Wagner," she says, "is a dear soul. But her ideas of art are limited. Her love of the change is too great. Her eyesight, too, is so bad that she cannot well judge a stage effect. Then the children constantly interfere. Frau Cosima will say, 'Let this be so,' Siegfried Wagner will say, 'No; it should be in that way.' 'Well, let it be as you wish.' Such a state of affairs, as you may imagine, is not very encouraging, especially to those who knew the master as I did."

MUSIC, according to Congreve, has charms to soothe the savage breast. But this is not always so, even in Italy. A few weeks ago, during a performance at Naples, a row occurred among two sets of youths as to the merits of a particular singer, and before long knives came into use. In the result, three corpses had to be solemnly removed to the mortuary, and all the medical men in the city found themselves called upon to deal with stabs, black eyes, or broken bones.

SIGNOR GUISEPPE SALVINI, younger son of the great Italian tragedian, has succeeded as an actor both in Italy and South America. He has studied English with great care, chiefly with the object of playing Hamlet in London and the United States. He is described by an Italian critic as "a perfect Adonis, with a face so beautiful that it baffles description."

SIGNOR GIORDANO has received M. Sardou's permission to turn *Fédora* into an opera, the book of which will be written by Signor Collanti.

The Sign of the Cross is doing well in Russia.

THE new measure against dramatic piracy in America has been passed by the President, and is not likely to become a dead letter. It provides that "any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition shall be liable for damages therefor in a sum not less than one hundred dollars for the first, and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance; and if the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, the guilty person or persons shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."

POOR old England! Theatrically, it would seem, we are in a very bad way, and are far behind America. At any rate, that is the opinion of the correspondent here of the *New York Mail and Express*. "Our dramatists and managers, as many have confessed to me, are working and producing plays," he says, "with their eyes fixed on America. They were working primarily for the American market; London was merely a secondary consideration, a sort of superior dog on which to try the dramatic fare ere catering for the American critics, where the money is made. It was American taste that was first being considered. And because we do not want London to be a secondary consideration to any other place on earth, and as we would rather playwrights and players should still consider this the Mecca of the dramatic world, we should be glad that America has ceased to be a gold mine for our stage folk."

IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery. The revival of *Cymbeline* in America is modelled closely upon that at our own Lyceum. The cool way in which the whole bag of tricks has been taken is quite refreshing. Such a course saves much trouble; but, in this instance, it is to be feared, the imitators are not happy.

MR. L. N. PARKER, at present in America, is busy with his new play, *The Mayflower*. The first act is in Holland, the second at Plymouth, and the third in Massachusetts.

COLONEL MAPLESON has been talking to a representative of the *New York Herald* about the prospects of opera in America. "When Jean de Reszke started," he said, "I paid him fifty dollars a week. Patti got only two hundred dollars a night. Now the star gets nearly all the money, the chorus little, the manager less. The public are fleeced unmercifully, but have only themselves to blame. They create these musical idols, and ought not to complain if their worship proves expensive. In America there is a special prejudice amongst American singers unless they have made a successful début abroad. I have brought out thirty-two American prima donnas, including Kellogg, Nordica, and Minnie Hauk. This list ought to satisfy you that your country can produce good voices. In fact, the future prima donnas must be American, because they pre-eminently have the voices and the temperament for opera. American sopranos have a quality of voice that is found nowhere else in the world. Music of a higher kind ought to be heard for less money."

AMERICAN singers in Europe, according to the same authority, are often bled by licensed pirates. "I know a girl who appeared in Milan in *Il Trovatore*. When all the preliminary expenses were paid, the management demanded from her two hundred dollars for the orchestra, a hundred dollars for the costumier, and the price of twenty shares in the syndicate before the curtain could be raised. She made a success, but on leaving the stage saw a notice that her services would not again be needed. They had another American to bleed!"

EVEN a single word of flattery may do much. Miss Jessie Davis, the prima donna, has had to deal with a manager who is a manager in more than one sense of the word. Tired out, she declined to take part in a particular performance. "But," remonstrated the manager, "we cannot get on without you." "No use," she said; "I cannot sing—positively." "Perhaps," he astutely went on; "but you can sing superlatively." Miss Davis smiled, consented to appear, and—surpassed herself.

NEW YORK has yet another attraction. The chief library there rejoices in the possession of a curious collection of operas performed in Italy between 1705 and 1893, first brought together at the Hague. They number 1300, and are bound in 113 volumes.

ANOTHER death on the stage. While singing at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, recently, Count Armand Decastan, professionally known as Signor Castelmarty, was taken ill. M. Jean de Reszke, who was with him at the time, rushed to his assistance, though only to see him die. Opera loses in him a fine voice, which had been heard in a very large number of parts, the repertory of this famous *basso* having been exceptionally complete. He first appeared in London in 1873. Both his voice and his acting improved greatly as time went on, and he developed into one of the most useful members an operatic company could possibly have. He used to assist Sir Augustus Harris in the stage management at Covent Garden, where his services in this respect were greatly in request partly owing to the fact that he could address the members of the various nationalities which go to make a chorus in their own tongues with fluency and correctness. His best part was that of Vulcan in *Philemon et Baucis*.

THE *Chicago Post* can be sarcastic. Lately it imputed to Wagner the dying declaration: "Seidi pleases me greatly." "Seidi *delights* me greatly," said Herr Seidi by way of correction. "We are sorry," says the *Post*, "that we are unable to recall the Teutonic equivalent, but we can readily apprehend the distinction. It is pleasant for us to know that the great master passed away in a condition of delight rather than in an ordinary state of pleasure, and it is the simplest justice to Herr Seidi that we should give him full credit as the cause of these transports. As for our venerated Wagner, he has passed to that kingdom where he will still be chief among the great musicians. In the stirring words of Herr Fink the greatest living Wagnerian poet:

'There is a land of pure delight,
Where soulful song holds sway;
Where *Siegfried* is performed all night,
And *Lohengrin* all day.
And kindred spirits all in white
On heavenly trombones play.'

THE THEATRE.

APRIL, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

THE MORALITY OF THEATRICAL GOSSIP.



IT is much too late in the day to protest against the personal gossip which enriches the columns of the newspapers. Every profession pays tribute to the dominant curiosity. It is not enough for an omnivorous public to read a successful author's books; he must yield his photograph to the shop-windows, his autograph to troops of admirers, his opinion of the Queen's glorious reign to the interviewers. When he is very green, he may think that his books ought to stand on their own merits; but a brief experience will convince him that a thousand and one ingredients, quite distinct from those merits, go to the making of his reputation. There is a public for his works—that is to say, the people who read them; there is another public which probably never turns his pages, but is deeply interested in chronicles of his personal habits, his meat and drink, the length of his hair. There is at least one author to-day whose hair is a subject of vehement polemics, which certainly do not tend to lessen the sale of his masterpieces. Eminent statesmen are in the same case; they ooze paragraphs at every pore; their table talk is served up to us day and night. We hear of a great Minister, who, in the midst of a grave foreign crisis, cracks very small jokes at the family dinner, and laughs at them more heartily than his audience. Cabinet Councils are supposed to be secret; but there are authentic anecdotes of “scenes,” and the humblest reader knows which right honourable gentleman is not on speaking terms with his colleagues. As for “society,” the only surprise is that the gossips find anything left to tell. Columns of

personal paragraphs are furnished to most of our morning and evening papers ; and yet there must be something better than stubble for the weekly journals. Competition is so keen that it is hard to see how anybody can profit by the disclosure of "exclusive" information, except the lady's-maid and the butler. We live in expectation of being accosted in the street by faded gentility, offering us matches or boot laces, and murmuring, "Please buy of me, kind sir. I once was a special gossip for the *Daily Blurter*, but an overcrowded market has reduced me to this !"

Of course, to this welter of triviality the theatrical profession lends an eleemosynary hand. It is not too much to say that the affairs of the stage, quite apart from the ordinary business of producing and acting plays, provide more employment for speculative wits than any other walk in life. The actor out of an engagement has at least the consolation of knowing that he may be good for a paragraph to some more or less deserving hanger-on of the theatrical world. Actors are no more than mortal, and they are guiltless of the affectation of indifference to any personal tribute which their scribbling friends may launch upon the tide of advertisement. It may lead to nothing. The universe may remain unmoved by the announcement that a certain gifted comedian has finished a prolonged tour in the Hebrides, and may be seen in London shortly in a new and powerful play by a master-hand. But the gifted comedian has the satisfaction of knowing that the paragraph has put money into the purse of the writer. Plays and players may come and go, or they may not come at all ; but it is all one to the paragraphist. If a theatrical enterprise closes in failure, he, at all events, is exempted from the calamity. When he watched Drury Lane burning, Sheridan remarked that a man had a right to make himself comfortable at his own fireside. This domestic gratification is always the privilege of the theatrical gossip, who warms both hands at the fire, whether it be lighted by success or disaster.

Some practitioners, it may be allowed, carry on the business harmlessly enough. They are content to make authorised statements about the intentions of managers with respect to forthcoming plays, the migration of well-known players from theatre to theatre, and other matters which are within the scope of legitimate information. But this is dull work for the inventive genius. He wants to startle the town with assertions which provoke a chorus of contradiction ; indeed, it is his pride that contradictions cover him like medals. He foreshadows the arrangements for the next season at a leading theatre, and when events do not justify the

prophecy, it is because the management changed its plans to spite him. He has a keen nose for the scent of scandal, and never passes within earshot of two chattering chorus-girls without profit. Not for him the monotony of official statements; he must have a more intimate inspiration than that; he is a gossip, not a gazetteer. The hasty babble of the dressing-room finds him an obedient echo, and he is not above the confidences of stage carpenters. Why should these things be hid? Why should the born tattler in these days of competition refrain from converting these voices into print and pence?

Copy, copy everywhere,
And not a drop of ink.

That would be an absurd sentiment for the paragraphist who is in the habit of confounding his rivals twice a week by his superior illumination of privacy. So the town is thick with rumours about the fortunes of this playhouse or that; we are warned of the impending break-up of old associations, dear to a whole generation of playgoers; and the herald of this coming woe weeps like the Walrus, holding a pocket handkerchief before his streaming eyes. "Would that fate had chosen some other messenger," he seems to cry, "for this sad news to all lovers of dramatic art! I am discharging a painful duty to my readers, and heaven is my witness that I wish my news were untrue; but, alas! though I shall be contradicted, as usual, by scribes who envy my unimpeachable sources of information, I must adhere to the melancholy fact." It is possible that this exhibition of heroism with a lacerated bosom is not all hypocrisy. Sir Peter Teazle's friends, who spread the story that he had a bullet in his thorax, were sincerely grieved by the mishap which they had invented. The gentleman who lives by disseminating hearsay in the newspapers may feel a real concern when he announces some wholly imaginary rupture in the dramatic sphere. We should think more of his sorrow if it sprang from a sense of his own mischievous irresponsibility; but as a contrite heart might entail a loss of income, we are not sanguine of such a reformation.

The mischief is plain enough. There are stories to which refutation seems to give new pinions. You bring them down in one place only to find that they are strong on the wing elsewhere. The gossip who is brought to book expresses his joy to hear that he is wrong, but gravely assures you that he was quite right *at the time*. Meanwhile, other ornithologists have taken his *canard*, fashioned it with feathers of their own fantasy, and launched it in mid air. The bird which is plucked in England renews its plumage and its impudence in America. A fable which was

lately circulated about Miss Ellen Terry and the Lyceum had not then, and has never had, the slightest shadow of excuse ; it belongs to the same category as the silly anecdote that Miss Terry was refused admission to the Monte Carlo casino because the dress she was wearing did not satisfy the fastidious taste of the directors. But this precious pair of *canards* are still manœuvring in 'provincial' newspapers, and in the idyllic atmosphere of the American Press ! No lie is too ridiculous on the face of it to obtain extensive credence amongst the gullible ; and even amongst the elect persistent repetition produces a lingering doubt. As we have said, it is too late to protest against a system of journalism which is responsible for this evil. We can only take its professors and show what manner of men they are—these purveyors of broken meats from the servants' hall, these traffickers in surmise, tossed from paragraph to paragraph, from idle curiosity to brainless malice. There seems to be an unlimited market for this stuff, and the least scrupulous vendor is regarded by some newspaper editors as a prize to be struggled for. But, on the whole, rag-picking, though less obtrusive, is a more honourable employment.

"THE THEATRE," APRIL, 1897.



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MISS GLADYS HOMFREY.

Portraits.

MISS GLADYS HOMFREY.

IT is rather bewildering to trace the short but already noteworthy career of Miss Gladys Homfrey. She has excelled in so many ways that the managers even now seem undecided as to where her strength really lies. At the outset she played Romeo, and was immediately engaged for pantomime and comic opera. Then she advertised herself as principal boy in pantomime, and was forthwith sought out for aristocratic and adventure parts. For a time she kept to these with excellent results, though only to find that farcical comedy claimed her for its own. Her performances in *The New Boy* and *Poor Mr. Potton* were in all respects admirable, and contributed in no slight degree to the success of those pieces. It might have been thought after this that her special *emploi* was definitely fixed. Not so; Mr. George Edwardes selected her to be the *grande dame* in his musical comedies, and at the present moment she is well and happy among the Japs in *The Geisha* at Daly's Theatre. Many will wonder which of the varied lines Miss Homfrey has taken she herself would have preferred. Unless we are mistaken, she does not spell art with a big A, and, endowed with strong good sense, wishes to make money while she can. Each line to her has pleasant points, the least attractive being that of a vindictive woman. She once had such a part under Mr. Thomas Thorne's management. Miss Evelyn Millard, who headed the cast, wished to introduce some friends to her. They absolutely refused, on the ground that anyone who could play such a terrible character must be a terrible woman. George Frederick Cooke, it may be remembered, was profoundly gratified by the volley of hisses that accompanied his superb devilry as Iago; and the subject of our present sketch, it will be seen, has received a similar tribute. Versatile, keenly intelligent, educated, and possessing a majestic presence, Miss Homfrey, an English gentlewoman of the best type, may be expected to do much, to hold a far higher position on the English stage than a want of the necessary opportunities has hitherto debarred her from achieving. To what extent she would profit by such opportunities a recollection of her acting in *The New Boy* and *Poor Mr. Potton* will show. Probably, however, she is reserved for work of a more ambitious kind.

The Round Table.

LADIES LAST ?

BY CECIL RALEIGH.

IF the report is true that the Queen's Diamond Jubilee will be distinguished by, amongst other things, a distribution of honours to the stage, everybody connected with the drama will feel intensely gratified. But the joy of the ladies will be a chastened exultation, for, so far as may be gathered, when the prizes are distributed they will only be there to look on. Instead, therefore, of clamouring, as some do, for a whole hatful of knighthoods, and for the incidental depreciation of a considerable distinction, would it not be well if an organised effort could be made towards associating the ladies of the stage with the recipients of the especial mark of favour that it is supposed the Queen intends to confer on her majesty's servants? The anticipated occasion, it must not be forgotten, is altogether unique.

The first theatrical knight was the late Sir Augustus Harris. But his elevation had nothing whatever to do with the stage. Incidentally, however, it was satisfactory to observe that the fact of his being a theatrical manager, and having been an actor, did not disqualify him from becoming Master of the Loriners' Company, Sheriff of the City of London, and eventually a knight. Fifty years ago prejudice would, in all probability, have precluded the possibility of these things. With Sir Henry Irving it was a very different matter, and a greater advance was marked. The brilliant career of a great actor was crowned by knighthood, given to him *because* he was a great actor. But the honour done to Sir Henry Irving was essentially personal. He loomed above the theatrical horizon, a majestic figure, alone, serene, and apart.

In the present supposed case, the art of the actor will at length be definitely recognised as a fine art, and will take its place beside the art of the painter, the sculptor, or the musician, and as an art it will be honoured as a whole by distinctions conferred on certain selected representatives. Mr. Charles Wyndham has directed a London theatre with honour to himself and infinite

advantage to the drama, longer than any living manager. The vigour and refinement of his acting are not surpassed even on the French stage. His indefatigable labours in the cause of theatrical charity are well known. He is in every way typical of active work in the present. To Mr. Bancroft the stage owes an enormous debt for his work in the immediate past. The first advance of the stage in social esteem and the remarkable artistic revival that followed the Tom Robertson epoch at the old Prince of Wales's are largely due to Mr. Bancroft's impulse and influence. That artistic revival was also made possible and enormously assisted by Mr. Clement Scott, who, by the vigour and virility of his criticisms, attracted unprecedented attention to the drama, and eventually obtained for it the prominent recognition now accorded it in the journals of this country. Nobody will question the right of Mr. Pinero to be regarded as our leading dramatist.

Here then stands the stage before us, all that is best of the present and past side by side with creative work and cultured criticism. The stage, as a whole, will unanimously applaud the selection of those through whom it will be honoured, and will rejoice at the distinctions conferred on them. But it is because this honour is to be an honour to a corporate body that we must deplore the apparent impossibility of conveying it in part through the gentler sex. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that in the entire domain of art women work at a decided disadvantage. In France the Legion of Honour, and in other countries other orders, offer a means of escape from the anomaly that prevails in England. With us, great artists can receive marks of royal favour and appreciation—if they are men. We are ruled over by the greatest Queen known to our history, but she can, practically, do nothing for her distinguished women.

There are of course those who hold that if an individual can establish his or her right to be recognised as a citizen of the universal republic of art, that individual should ask no more than to be judged by his or her work. This might be a comfortable theory, if it were generally accepted. But it is not. In Lord Tennyson and Lord Leighton we saw a poet and a painter win each a peerage. Honours fall like the leaves in autumn on doctors, musicians, and men of science. Now it is the actors' turn, and the turn of the writers for, and of, the stage.

But the ladies remain in the cold. And yet is the illumination and illustration of the stage complete while nothing whatever is done for Miss Ellen Terry? Without making invidious comparisons, it is permissible to ask what actors have done more for the modern stage than Mrs. Bancroft, Mrs. Kendal, Miss Bateman, Miss Geneviève Ward, and that absolute idol of the "gods,"

idolised in her own particular sphere, Miss Nelly Farren? Are there many men upon the stage who can compare in their own lines with Miss Kate Rorke and Mrs. John Wood? Yet when honours are in the air they must look on and get nothing. This is not only regrettable, it is ridiculous. One need not be a fanatical apostle of the rights of women to demand equality for artistic labour. This is no question of the right of ingress to any particular field. It is a consideration of work actually done. For that work there should be a fitting reward. And since so much is to be done to make the Queen's Diamond Jubilee memorable, is it indiscreet to hope that some new order will be founded for the especial recognition of art, letters, and science, but not restricted to sex? Surely this is not much to plead for when the greatest empire that the world has ever seen is ruled over by the most honoured lady in our kingdom. Surely at such a time and under such conditions the rule should assuredly be, in the matter of distinctions, *ladies first*!

WHAT IS THE THEATRICAL PUBLIC?

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

MANY endeavours have been made to account for the crowds which flock nowadays to the representations of "musical plays," dramatised novels, and dramas on pseudo-religious subjects. It is recognised that the great popular successes—the successes which last for twelve months (or more) at a time, and are repeated in the provinces and elsewhere—are made, for the most part, by pieces of the type of *The Gaiety Girl*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and *The Sign of the Cross*. Whence come the multitudes which swarm to see such entertainments—which fill some fortunate theatres not only for a hundred nights successively, but for two hundred, and three hundred, and more? The latest to essay an answer to this question is Mr. Sydney Grundy, who spoke wittily on the subject at the Dramatic and Musical Fund dinner. Who, he asked, made triumphant the career of the three classes of production named? "It could not be the old playgoer," said Mr. Grundy, "because, when there were only half a dozen theatres [in London], there was not quite enough of him to go round." In Mr. Grundy's view, "a new public has taken possession of the theatres." The stage has attracted to itself entirely new sections of the population; and it is to the influx of those new sections that we owe the present depression of the

“serious drama”—the drama dealing seriously with the life of to-day.

There is something to be said for this theory. Pieces of the sort described appear to have struck new veins in the strata of the British public. Those belonging to the *Gaiety Girl* genre appeal irresistibly to the frivolous and the well-to-do—to those who dine well and wish nothing to interfere with the processes of digestion. This is the class which formerly patronised burlesque, was afterwards driven to the music halls, and now has returned to its old love. On the whole, the *Gaiety Girl* genre exists mainly for the aristocracy and the Stock Exchange, though, to speak more generally, it has attractions for all who at the playhouse frankly seek amusement. Works like *The Prisoner of Zenda* have charms, in particular, for that great section of the middle-class which loves to see on the boards the people of whom it has read in books. The youngsters who delight above all in pictures develop into adults for whom the pictorial representation of a favourite fiction is a joy for ever. These are but children of a larger growth; and plays like *The Prisoner of Zenda* give keen pleasure to the thousands who have not been educated out of the simple pleasures of their youth. Such pieces, again, as *The Sign of the Cross* capture the hearts and the imaginations of that large body of people who, though not playgoers, would like to be so if only they could find an excuse for so being. That has been Mr. Wilson Barrett's prime achievement—that he has lured to the theatre thousands who had never been there before, or, if at all, had been there only *incognito*. He stormed Clapham and Little Bethel, and carried them triumphantly. The alliance between the Church and the Stage is now an old one; but that between the Stage and Dissent dates, one may say, from the production of *The Sign of the Cross*.

And, as regards London, it must be remembered that the three classes above noted are being reinforced regularly by sympathisers from the provinces and America. The frivolous well-to-do, the lovers of realised fiction, the devotees of the so-called “religious” drama, exist everywhere more or less, and are ever ready to swell the attendance at their chosen playhouses. This, no doubt, applies with equal truth to the “serious” play—to Shakspeare, to melodrama, and to the modern problem drama—to Mr. Pinero and to Mr. Jones—all of these, happily having their vogue and their supporters. But one can never hope to have for “serious” drama—in our time, at least—the vogue and the support that can be depended upon for the lighter forms of dramatic entertainment. The “average sensual man”—and woman—are in the majority, and he and she do not want to be

serious at the play. By which one means that they do not desire to be made to think and to be made uncomfortable. It is not for those purposes that people in general plank down their half-guineas at the box-office. That there is in England a gratifyingly large public for all that is worthiest and best in dramatic and histrionic work one is glad to know; testimony to its existence is given very effectively by the long "runs" achieved by every fine Shakspearean production, by every commendable presentation of a stage classic, by every honest appeal to the healthy theatrical instinct of the people. At the same time, the name of the intelligent and conscientious playgoer is not legion; whereas that word may truthfully be applied to those citizens who go to the theatre not to be impressed or edified and bettered, but to be startled or titillated and diverted.

Mr. Grundy, optimistically, holds that "the new public," "when it has passed through a tedious process of education," will become regular in its playgoing. He is "firmly of opinion that a larger audience than the English drama has ever yet had is in process of evolution." "The old public, never very large, is almost swamped," but a new one is in course of creation. Let us hope so. On this point, it may be observed, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones does not agree with his brother dramatist. "I have not very much faith," he said at the Dramatic and Musical Fund dinner, "in educating playgoers. No, no; I'm sure you will agree with me that in all matters of art and literature the great British public is best left alone to its own choice. We won't try to educate the English playgoer. We will allow him to please himself, to take his own choice, whether it be Shakspeare or pantomime, problem play or variety entertainment." Well, that he will make his own choice we may be sure. The British amusement-seeker is not to be coerced. One can imagine that as time goes on knowledge and refinement will spread, and that gradually the ranks of the cultured playgoer will be extended. One hopes the same for literature, one hopes the same for pictorial art. But is it likely that the admirers of pieces like *The Gaiety Girl*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and *The Sign of the Cross* will ever perceptibly decrease in number? Are they not likely to be added to as days go by? As the "serious" playgoer multiplies, so will the easy-going; nay, the ratio in the latter case will probably be much greater than in the former. Contemporary with the spread of knowledge and refinement will be, in all probability, the intensifying of the stress and strain of life, with the inevitable growth of a desire for agreeable distraction at the theatre and elsewhere.

"The cloud will pass," says Mr. Grundy. "Presently the

public will discover that variety shows are deadly monotonous, and that good novels make indifferent plays." But the "variety shows" have been occupying the boards now for the best part of ten years or so, and yet the taste for them gives no sign of declining. There have been desperately dull "musical farces," and they have had brief and inglorious careers; but there is nothing in the nature of a "musical farce" to make it necessarily monotonous. The latest of these shows [in London]—*The Circus Girl*—is one of the most prosperous. *The Geisha*, after attracting crowded houses for many months, gives no indication of a decline in popularity. Nor is it safe to anticipate that the dramatised novel will readily outstay its welcome. It is by no means the "new thing" that some people seem to consider it. It has existed, and succeeded, in England since the time of Shakspeare, most of whose plays, when you come to think of it, are dramatisations of popular stories. The simple Elizabethan had the same æsthetic desires as the simple Victorian. He liked to witness on the stage dramatic and pictorial illustrations of the "novels" or ballads that he had read or had heard recited. The demand for such things fluctuated from time to time, but no one can say with truth that it is peculiar to the present day. Was not our own playgoing youth largely fed upon dramatisations of the tales of Scott, and Dickens, and Ainsworth, and Charles Reade, and, more lately, of Miss Braddon and the like? It would be sad indeed if the dramatised novel ever usurped too prominent a place upon our stage, just as it would be sad indeed if the musical farce or the "religious" play occupied the boards to such an extent as wholly to extrude the classics or the original drama of our time. But that is a very different thing from expecting or wishing that the dramatised novel and the musical farce will or should ever be wholly banished from our stage, whatever may be our progress in the direction of culture and good judgment.

To sum up. There has unquestionably been a considerable accession, during the last few years, to the numbers of the playgoing public. During those years hundreds of people have attended the theatre who never attended it before. This accession, if we go back far enough, received its first impulse at the hands of the lessee of the Lyceum, who brought back to the theatre the educated classes, who had been alienated from it. The educated classes have given the theatre their hearty support, and now the middle-class in general is beginning to follow their example. It is not precisely an educated body, and its present influence, consequently, is being thrown into the scale on the side of the simpler and easier dramatic pleasures—those which tend

frankly and readily to diversion without the expenditure of thought or of imagination. Mr. Grundy hopes it will be "educated" into preferring something better; Mr. Jones does not believe in any such "education." The chances are that as the circle of playgoers widens it will include more and more admirers and supporters of the classic and the serious drama, but not appreciably fewer admirers and supporters of the light and frivolous drama than we possess at present. The idle and wealthy, the uncultured and hard-wrought, will alike continue to bestow their patronage upon the musical farce and the dramatised novel; while there will always be many on whom the mingling on the stage of sentiment and religion, set forth in pseudo-Biblical style, will exercise a fascination not to be resisted.

THE SUBURBAN THEATRE.

BY HENRY ELLIOTT.

THE subject of the past, present, and future of the suburban theatre was bound, sooner or later, to force itself upon the attention of those who are intimately interested in the condition of the stage. Slowly, but surely, the central parts of London have been enclosed within a chain of playhouses, mostly spacious and commodious, appealing to large sections of the population, and, by the very fact of their existence, appearing to threaten the prosperity of the west-end theatres. It matters little by what process this result has been achieved—by whom the movement for the "evangelisation" of suburban audiences was begun, or by whom it has since been promoted. Nor is there any need to go into the remote history of the suburban theatre, and to show, as Mr. Mulholland very properly showed the other day, that Shakspeare was himself closely connected with a suburban place of dramatic entertainment. These, after all, are the commonplaces of theatrical history. More to the purpose is it to remind the unobservant playgoer, if any such there be, that from Hammersmith on the one side to Stratford on the other, and likewise from Holloway at one point of the compass to Camberwell at another, the heart of playgoing London is surrounded on all sides by theatres, usually large and well-appointed, which cannot but play an important part in metropolitan stage history in the days to come.

Now, it is natural enough that, at the first blush, the existence of all these houses—something like fourteen, all told—should

suggest to timid folk a corresponding drain upon the resources of the west-end establishments. It is argued that the latter are "patronised" by thousands of suburban residents; plump a theatre down in the midst of those residents, and the temptation on their part to desert the central playhouses and attach themselves to the local temple of the drama will be irresistible. How much pleasanter and cheaper for them to go to the playhouse next door than to journey into town by rail, or cab, or bus, or tramway, in all sorts of weather, and at more or less considerable expense! The local theatre charges less for its seats than do its west-end rivals; it is within easy reach, and so saves the disbursing of money on locomotion. It may be, it probably will be, that the entertainment supplied at the suburban theatre will be very much lower in quality than that furnished within a stone's throw of Charing-cross. But, it is argued, suburban dwellers may be disposed to overlook that fact in view of the other fact, that by attending the playhouse near at hand they achieve a saving both in specie and in exertion. Moreover, those people who were wont to figure in the upper-circle of the west-end houses can now, for the same money, disport themselves in the local "stalls," which is a consideration not to be despised.

Let it be granted at once that the suburban playhouses may draw away a certain amount of business from the west-end houses. But it will only be (if at all) from the west-end houses of the second and third rank. That the playgoers of Holloway or of Brixton may become more and more unwilling to pay half-a-guinea for a stall, wherein to witness a second or third class entertainment, we can well believe; but that the first-class west-end theatres will be affected injuriously in the least degree by the outlying playhouses is impossible to suppose. As Sir Henry Irving said in his letter to Mr. Mulholland—with a touch of characteristic humour—"I certainly do not anticipate that the Strand will be deserted o' nights. We shall continue in that quarter, I imagine, to make our humble pittance out of the suburban playgoer." Whatever the suburban theatres may be able to do in the way of attracting local patronage, there are respects in which they will never be able to compete with the principal playhouses of the west. To see the best plays staged and enacted in the best fashion, it will still be necessary to resort to theatres within half a mile of Charing-cross. The companies which provide the programmes at the suburban theatres are often, nay usually, excellent, but it is very rarely, if ever, that they can challenge comparison with even the second-best of the west-end. Assuredly those suburban playgoers, who desire to see Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Tree, and so forth, must go to the Lyceum, the St. James's,

or Her Majesty's; there is no chance of seeing them at Holloway or Stratford, at Brixton or Hammersmith, at the ruling prices.

Meanwhile, it is absurd to regard the local playhouses as appealing only to the local "regular playgoer." If they did no more than that, we should be unable to take a hopeful view of their financial possibilities. The number of local "regular playgoers" would, of necessity, soon be exhausted. All they could do would be to fill the local playhouse for about one day in the week. But we know that the suburban theatres are in no such parlous state. On the contrary, they attract good audiences every day; they adventure sometimes upon two matinées a week, and find them profitable. In other words, they have created a public for themselves. To paraphrase a famous saying, local people now go to the theatre who never went before, and those who always went to the theatre now go the more. Such managers as Mr. Mulholland have struck new veins in local ore. Settling down in a locality, they have gradually educated it into playgoing. Every day they are busily engaged in manufacturing new laws of the stage. Suburbs which hitherto have depended for recreation upon the amateur concert or the professional lecture have learned to find pleasure in the playhouse. The drama has been brought down to their door. Playbills have stared them in the face. It can no longer be possible for them to remain in ignorance of the world of entertainment. Familiarity has bred, not contempt, but sympathy and respect. A new source of gratification has come into their lives. The suburban theatre has broadened their intellectual and æsthetic horizon. The Philistinism of Brixton and Clapham has been challenged and routed by the children of light; and the outcome of the conflict cannot but be beneficial to the Drama.

This is the view taken by the leaders of the profession. "I cannot but believe," writes Sir Henry Irving, "that the growth of suburban theatres will greatly increase the number of playgoers, and do much to widen the rational amusements of the particular districts." "I should say," writes Mr. Tree, "that the effect of local theatres would be to draw to those establishments a class of public who had hitherto abstained from visiting the regular theatres. Once the taste is created, the theatre-goer will probably drift towards the west-end houses." Another very astute *entrepreneur* "thinks that the effect of a local theatre upon the hitherto non-playgoers of a given district tends to create a greater demand for theatrical amusement, and at the same time opens up ground that has formerly been untouched." It is clear that the established west-end managers have no fear whatever that the suburban theatres will do them harm; rather do they

welcome and approve them as nurseries of the playgoer. This is the truly statesmanlike attitude to adopt. There is no occasion for alarm or even for disquietude. No really good west-end "show" will ever be neglected because of the existence of the suburban theatres. On the contrary, these harmless, necessary establishments will, in the most obliging manner possible, train up the local public in the way in which it should go—namely, to the fountain-head, if it desires to see and study dramatic enterprise in its highest and most interesting forms.

THE DEARTH OF DRAMATISTS.

BY A LOOKER-ON.

THE Renaissance of the British Drama! What a great deal we heard of it a year or two ago! How we were thrilled as we thought of what was in store for us! Had not Mr. Henry Arthur Jones set the idea going, and had not all the many industrious writers and talkers, who are always ready to push on a barrel of this kind when once it is started from the top of the hill, done their best to drive into the head of the public the conviction that the third great era of the English stage was fairly at hand? And what irony does the phrase seem to suggest now! The whirligig of Time has indeed brought in his revenges, and the labouring mountains have presented to a waiting universe the ridiculous mouse of musical comedy. What a difference between the joyful pæans of Mr. Jones, sounded in the volume that was to be treasured up by future ages as the first recognition of the great dawn so nigh at hand, and the speech he made the other day!

"At the present moment they had not a single west-end theatre producing an original play dealing with national life and character. . . . How carefully recent English drama had steered clear of any suspicion of portraying the actual life of actual living men and women!" And as to the future: "Who knew whether, if they carefully left the English playgoer to his own devices, the drama of our England of to-day might not soon approach, or even surpass, in its refined intellectuality and spiritual penetration, those gay and subtle entertainments provided by the wandering Ethiopian, not on his native desert sands, but on the wave-beaten shores of Margate. While the English drama seemed to be preening its wings for a flight towards these dusky intellectual heights, why should the poor playgoer be pestered with the efforts of Shakspeare, or Sheridan,

or Grundy, or Smith, or Brown, or Robinson, or even Jones?'' And the worst of it is that it is all so true. There is, as Mr. Archer put it, a blight on the drama; and, until a remedy be found, the same cry will go up that the theatre is languishing under some baneful influence that prevents it from being anything like what it might be were it freed from the chain that binds it in its present evil state. What is this blight? what this baneful influence? It cannot be summed up in a sentence. Many causes contribute to it. The one of them that I propose to deal with in this article is the lack of encouragement to men of letters to devote their energies to writing plays.

It is true that at the moment the outlook is a little brighter. Mr. Jones's own new play is about to be produced; by the time these lines are read Mr. Pinero's comedy will be running; and there are tidings of other pieces shortly to appear. But, as one swallow does not make a summer, so neither do one or two playwrights make a national drama. We are grateful for Mr. Pinero, we are interested in Mr. Jones, Mr. Grundy and Mr. Carton entertain us as a rule, and there are three or four other writers whose infrequent efforts may be looked forward to with pleasure. But the number of dramatists whose plays ever obtain a hearing is extraordinarily small. Look at the novelists. There is a new one almost every week, in whose work can be detected promise of really good work (promise unfortunately too often unfulfilled), whose books can be read with interest, even if they are crude, by those who care to look for merits and signs of cleverness amid the defects of inexperience. A great deal of rubbish is published, no doubt, but the interesting, intelligent work is there; and, judgment being at a discount nowadays, unless the rubbish were taken the good work would probably never get a hearing.

Now, if it were as reasonably easy for an author to submit to the public a play as it is for him to get a novel brought before them, what would be the result? Much of the talent and a little of the genius that now go to the production of novels would be turned to the purposes of the stage. A great many bad pieces would see the light, but there would also be given many good ones, and the authors of the good ones would be encouraged to write better and better until they really turned out thoroughly good work. As to the bad ones, they would go hence and be no more seen, and their authors would in time realise their incompetence, and devote themselves to something else. As matters stand at present, it is positively not worth while for the struggler in literature to attempt the composition of plays. Say he writes a novel. He sends it to a publisher. In the course of a few weeks he receives a polite note telling him either that "the reader's opinion is such as to

justify its being undertaken," or that "it is unfortunately not suitable, and is therefore being returned." If the latter is the author's fate, he sends the manuscript round to another, and another yet, until he finds someone ready to take the risk and to bring his story out. The whole transaction is carried out in a businesslike, and, as a rule, in a courteous manner. Very different is the beginner's treatment if he casts his ideas into the form of a play. He selects a manager, and deposits his precious burden at the stage door. Then he waits. Waits for months, and receives no word. Waits, perhaps, for years, and hears nothing either of acceptance or rejection. When he makes up his mind to inquire about the fate of his MS., he is met with indifference, too often with downright discourtesy. If he is lucky, a search is instituted (did anyone ever know a manager who had any arrangement to enable him to put his hand at once upon a particular piece?), and after another interval back comes the MS., sometimes ragged and dirty—sometimes in exactly the same condition as when it was deposited, bearing obvious signs of never having been even looked through. Occasionally a manager will read a play and like it; will tell the author so, and offer to keep it on the chance of being able to introduce it to the public, possibly paying down a sum of money for this privilege. Of course the author jumps at the proposal, but what is the result? In nine cases out of ten the piece is never produced at all. The manager continues to speak hopefully, but there is always some obstacle in the way. The fact of the matter is that he hesitates to take any risk.

Here we come to the root of the matter. It is this shrinking from anything new, this timidity as to incurring any chance of failure, that is responsible for the condition—the lifeless, backboneless condition—of the English drama of to-day, when we compare it with the other branch of fiction. It is not so much the actor-manager system that is the enemy, as many people think. It is not the case that leading players always demand star parts, though, like other people, they naturally prefer good ones. It is the eagerness of managers to make money quickly that prevents the free circulation of new dramatic ideas. They spend too much to begin with, and they look for too great a return upon the capital laid out. Therefore they fight shy of new authors whom the public does not know, and, instead of looking about for good plays wherever they can find them, they are always feverishly tapping the barometer of the public taste to see what kind of entertainment they can provide with most profit to themselves. When a play to be counted really a success must run at least two hundred nights it is not to be expected that the successful productions will, save in excep-

tional cases, appeal to intelligent and educated audiences. It would be unreasonable to ask that all managers should appeal to this class, but surely it might be worth the while of some to do so now and then. Mr. Tree has earned our gratitude more than once by daring experiments. Who that was present at the first performance of *Captain Swift* is likely to forget the storm of applause that hailed the appearance of an absolutely new dramatist? *Once Upon a Time* was another experiment; so was *Beau Austin*. Mr. Alexander treated us to *Guy Domville*, which was a failure, because, forsooth, it only ran for a few weeks! Mr. Comyns Carr, when he gave *A Leader of Men*, introduced a new writer whose work showed that he might be able to produce a good play with practice, but who has never been heard of since! Of late such daring has become very rare. It is always the taste of the many that is consulted, and consequently "the few" (though there are plenty of them) are becoming less and less interested in the theatre, and pay it fewer and fewer visits.

The plain truth of the matter is that the majority of playgoers are neither very intelligent nor more than half-educated. Horse-play is more to their taste than wit; claptrap and strained sentiment preferable to anything like subtlety or study of character. This being the case, it is only natural that the majority—the vast majority—of theatrical entertainments should be of such a nature as to attract them. "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give." But the mistake that managers make is in thinking that all the drama's patrons are made to the same pattern.

Does a dramatised tale of adventure leap into sudden favour? The streets are filled at once with managers seeking other books that can be turned into plays and making frantic efforts to secure the services of the adapter who was responsible for the success of the first. Is there a turn of the wheel to the advantage of farces with music? Straightway nearly all the theatres in London lay themselves out to provide this kind of entertainment. Has one dramatist gained success with a serious play of modern life? Others are so importuned to do likewise and to be quick about it that there is a hasty manufacture of cheap and nasty imitations, made simply to sell, and fully achieving that object so far as all who pay to see them are concerned.

Now, look at novels once again. There is a fashion in them certainly. At one moment the prevailing note is the hoarse cry of the revolting woman; at another the clash of swords and the ring of spurs upon a stone courtyard; yet, again, the gentle cooing of the dove, symbol of idyllic country-life, or the broad speech of the Kailyard. But publishers recognise, as theatrical managers will not, that there are various publics to be supplied,

and they act accordingly. While the sex novel was in the full tide of success there was, nevertheless, plenty of room found in the literary omnibus for Mr. Stanley Weyman and Mr. Anthony Hope. While the prevailing fashion was all for romance, those whose taste did not lie in this direction were never left unprovided for. Whatever happens to be the trend of the public taste, the admirers of Miss Marie Corelli's works can always obtain more of these marvellous productions without any difficulty. And so it ought to be, but is not, with plays.

There is room for all kinds. There are audiences ready to take an interest in any tolerably good piece of any description. Only—and this is the hinge upon which the whole question turns—the number of those who will care for a play like *The Benefit of the Doubt*, or a witty farce, such as *The White Elephant* (to take a recent example), is much smaller than that of the people who became almost lyrical in their enthusiasm for *Trilby* or *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and keep *Charley's Aunt* running for several years. Until managers realise and act upon this, the present state of things will continue. Short runs for good plays must be the rule, and in most cases “the better the play the shorter the run.” Money-making may be a slightly longer process on these conditions; but there is no reason why a well-managed theatre, presenting nine or ten plays a year, and appealing to the more cultured class of playgoers, should not pay, and pay handsomely. Most of the playhouses must endeavour to attract the majority, and go on trying to find pieces that will run for many months, or even years. But surely the minority have some claim to attention. If only there were, say, just one theatre where that much-abused person, the “intellectual playgoer,” could be sure of finding something to interest him. Not necessarily something he would fall into raptures over and declare a masterpiece, but something that showed signs of having been put together by a man of sense and ability, writing for audiences of the same calibre as himself. All that those for whom I plead want is the chance of seeing what the writers of the day could produce in the way of plays if given a fairly free hand and encouraged to do their best. At present the ring of dramatists is far too small to give the drama a chance. The difficulties in the way of the author who would fain try his fortune with stage plays are too great. If every piece produced is expected to enjoy a long run, and the rising author has no chance of a hearing, it cannot be supposed that much interest will be taken in the theatre by the minority to whom I have referred. They will go to the play occasionally in the hope of being amused, and, when they have dined well and occupy a comfortable seat, they will enjoy themselves tolerably. But

it is only on rare occasions that you will hear them discussing what they have seen, and you feel that for them the theatre exists merely as a form of light entertainment to be patronised whenever they have nothing particular to do.

In a further article I hope to deal with other aspects of this problem, and to consider "ways and means" of arriving at some solution.

ACTING AND ITS SISTER ARTS.

BY RICHARD DAVEY.

WHEN I had the pleasure of lecturing recently before the Playgoers' Club at St. James's-hall, I ventured to make a few remarks concerning the intimate connection which exists between the dramatic and the sister arts of painting, sculpture, and music. The reports in the newspapers, though most flattering, were not quite accurate, and some merriment was made at my expense in various quarters because I had advised members of the dramatic profession to frequent the National Gallery, the British Museum, and other like institutions with a view to improving, not only their minds, but their art. Several writers, and notably a gentleman connected with the *Daily Telegraph*, who favoured me with a leading article on the matter, thought the advice good, nevertheless, they appeared to think that only followers of Melpomene should snatch a "wrinkle" from the Apollo Belvedere or the Niobe. This was distinctly not my meaning. I cannot for the life of me see why Mr. Wilson Barrett, or for the matter of that Sir Henry Irving, should monopolise the works of Phidias and Praxiteles to the exclusion of "Little Tich" and Miss M. A. Victor, for instance. What I really meant was this: That the rising members of the dramatic profession, owing to long "runs" of pieces, in which probably they take but very unimportant parts, have a great deal of idle time left on their hands which they could spend with more advantage to themselves and the public in studying their art than in gossiping at the bars of the Gaiety, the Adelphi, *et alia*. I think that the dramatic, like every other art, has to be earnestly studied, and that, moreover, it is necessary in order to acquire perfection in one art to have a more than superficial knowledge of others. The actor is constantly making pictures, so to speak, of himself upon the stage; therefore he can have no better guide in pose and gesture-making than the great painters and sculptors who have learnt so skilfully to pose their figures and to give expression to their subject. It seems to me quite ridiculous that a young man who is studying

for the stage should neglect to acquire some knowledge of costuming, for instance, so that when he appears in a costume piece he is obliged to go to a professional costumier whose taste is often questionable. A week or two spent in the Reading and Print Rooms of the British Museum would soon open his eyes to the deficiencies of his education in this particular, and give him an immense number of valuable hints, enabling him to avoid the numerous blunders which are so frequently made even by artists who have reached the highest rung of the ladder of fame. A few hours spent once a week in the great picture galleries, too, would teach him harmony of colour, the arrangement of drapery, and add very considerably to his general artistic lore. Moreover, it would help him to talk in general society with authority on subjects which, though not directly, are nevertheless intimately connected with his profession. How few actors who play in pieces, the scenes of which are laid in classical times, are aware that there is not a single Greek or Roman statue the arms of which are raised above the level of the brow, an evidence that in the classical gymnasiums people were taught not to uplift the arms as we so frequently see done when actors are invoking the deities, in such plays for instance as *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Jules Janin tells a curious anecdote of Rachel when she was rehearsing the part of Pauline in *Polyeucte*. She was coached never to lift her hands above her head until she reached the moment of her conversion to Christianity, and then, when pronouncing the famous line :—

Je sais, je vois, je crois,

she suddenly raised her arms and her hands as high as possible towards the heaven of the Christians, which is supposed to be directly above. The graceful posing of Mary Anderson in *Pygmalion and Galatea* was the result of studies in the sculpture galleries of the British Museum made by that lady when she was rehearsing this part. I mentioned in my lecture that almost every gesture and certainly every determined attitude, made by Ristori in her matchless performance of *Medea* was directly inspired by her studies in the sculpture galleries of Rome, Florence, and Paris. Salvini, too, was a profound student of painting and sculpture.

True, the comic actor does not require this sort of education as urgently as does the tragic, but he, also, could pick up many a suggestion by turning over the leaves of those splendid portfolios in the Print Room of the British Museum and in her majesty's collection at Windsor, which contains an endless series of grotesques and caricatures by Leonardo da Vinci and other

great masters of the Italian and Dutch schools. Then come the arts of dancing, fencing, and singing, all of which are indispensable to the histrionic student if he earnestly wishes to obtain lasting fame and, what is still more important, fortune—especially in so critical an age as the present, when errors of detail are detected by the spectators often much sooner than they are by the performers. I remember, when in New York, many years ago, to have made the acquaintance of a young gentleman who was then preparing himself for the stage. He had much in his favour—good appearance and an excellent voice; but somehow or other as an actor he was never a great success. I advised him to set to work and study the arts sisters to the dramatic; to pass some hours every day in the Astor Library, where there is an admirable collection of art works; to go to the Metropolitan Museum and see what he could find there—in short, instead of bemoaning his fate, cheerfully to improve himself in every way. I lost sight of him for two years. One afternoon he walked into my study and told me that he had followed my advice, and as a result had made himself so useful to the management of the theatre in which he was engaged that he was now in excellent circumstances. Although he never became a first-class actor, he is at present one of the ablest stage-managers in the world—one who knows every detail of costume, who could put his finger in a moment on any weak spot of detail. His practical knowledge of painting helped him to arrange a scene picturesquely, and, above all, to contrive admirable and novel effects of light.

The great danger, to my mind, in matters connected with the stage, especially in these days of prolonged runs, is waste of time, and the object of my short address to the Playgoers' Club was to call the attention of rising actors to this fact, and to point out to them this danger and guard them against it, to inspire them with a love, not only of their own, but of all the arts with which, as I have already pointed out, the stage is intimately connected. It is all very well learning a part, and how to walk upon the stage, and then imagine, as so many do, that you know "all about it." The theatrical profession, which is exceedingly remunerative, requires in most cases more than this. There are, indeed, many actors who have achieved fame and fortune by means which I might almost call illegitimate. They have fallen in with fortune merely because they have been given a part which suits them physically and intellectually, like a glove. But the mass are, as a rule, less fortunate, and, therefore, to them a well-organised system of study is an absolute necessity. How often have young actors said to me, "Oh! these long runs are so wearisome; a fellow has nothing to do all day long but knock about," and how

often have I answered them, "Believe me, my friend, if you wish to succeed in your art you must study, and you must improve your mind and your body too. You must enlarge your experience and cultivate every possible accomplishment which is likely to serve you in your career!" I could point out half-a-dozen young actors and actresses at the present moment who are gifted with very pleasing singing-voices, and who could, on an occasion, make an absolute hit by the pleasant rendering of a simple ballad, but who, alas! waste their time instead of studying singing. There is a young lady, now playing in *La Poupée*, who has a mere thread of a voice, but she was persuaded to cultivate it, with the result that all London knows. That tiny voice is managed with such consummate skill that the young lady's success depends more upon it than upon her acting. A famous French actress said to her some years ago, "My friend, look here, you have a very little, pretty voice; cultivate it, it will be so useful to you some time or other." The young lady took the hint, and has certainly had no reason to regret having done so. I know a young gentleman who is winning his way to the front very fast, and who did me the honour to follow similar advice which I bestowed upon him, and forthwith put himself through a severe course of artistic study. He joined a first-class travelling company, playing a very small part. One day the stage-manager was taken ill, and the company was at its wit's ends to know what to do, for they were in the midst of a rehearsal, and not one of them knew anything about "staging." My young gentleman assured the manager that he could undertake the task, and did so to the entire satisfaction of the manager and of his fellow-actors. This brought him forward in his profession, and within two months, instead of earning 30s. a week, his salary was raised to £5. Then, again, in these days, when the actor is admitted into what is called "society" much more readily than was the case thirty or forty years ago, how agreeable and successful is a well-informed man, conversant on other subjects than those immediately connected with "the profession"—in a word, a cultivated gentleman, and not a mere gossip, who can talk of nothing but stage scandal.

AFTER THE PLAY.

By PHILIP BEAUFOY.

THE curtain fell on the last act of the new play called *Dust and Ashes*. It had gone splendidly throughout, and now that it

was over the audience resolved to give the play a "send-off" worthy of its merits.

When a British audience makes up its mind to be enthusiastic no audience in the world can beat it, and to-night the people at the Regency Theatre seemed to go mad with enthusiasm. The piece had hit home, it had gone straight to the heart of every stallite, pittite, and boxite, and there was not one dissentient voice to mar the harmony of the general rejoicing.

All the actors and actresses engaged in the representation received vociferous calls, but the greatest enthusiasm of the evening was reserved for the author, who had to take no fewer than seven distinct calls.

Walter Conyers, the author in question, was well nigh beside himself with excitement. Success such as this he had never dreamed of; he had scarcely even dared to hope for so great a measure of the world's praise. And he knew, moreover, that the eulogies of to-night were but the forerunners of a thousand more praises in the weeks to come in the pages of the newspapers throughout the land.

Happy? Ah, he was happy, with the joy of first success, the joy that comes once in this poor theatre of life, and never, never again. In years to come, Conyers might beat his to-night's record; he might stand on the highest pinnacle of fame, but never more would he know the keen delight of the first—the very first—success which was with him on this wonderful night.

But far above the sounds of the many voices in the theatre there sounded in his ears one other voice—blotting out the mighty sea of faces which looked from every corner of the mighty house, there was another face—the voice and the face of her whom he loved more than his life, more than his success, more than his soul, the voice and face of Mildred, his young wife.

He had been married two years, and they had been for him two years of radiant happiness. She was marvellously beautiful, and to the artistic soul of this man physical beauty was a thing divine; all other things went down before it. He worshipped her as on the day when he had first seen her.

And what was her feeling towards him? Cold, in all truth—cold to the point of indifference. But, with the blindness of a happy lover, he did not perceive the true state of her emotions, and he fancied, poor fellow, that her devotion to him was even as his devotion to her.

To-night she had begged to be excused from attending the first production of his play, in consequence of a violent headache. Most husbands would have considered such an excuse somewhat extraordinary on such a night; not so Conyers. Whatever

Mildred did was right. Wrong itself became right when Mildred was the wronger.

It was of this woman that he was thinking as he passed through the stage door, amid the congratulations of the bystanders, and so out into the Strand.

A crowd of loungers at the corner recognised him, and gave him a cheer. He hardly noticed it, for he was thinking of his wife. Cheers meant little to him; what would she say?

One of the most famous actors in England, a man with a European reputation, caught his hand as he went by, and cried:

"A million congratulations, my dear boy; I was in front to-night as it was an off-night, and it's a long time since I have had such a charming evening. Come to the Garrick and have some supper, if you're not already booked."

"Thanks, many thanks," returned Conyers, "but I must hurry home. You see my wife will be wanting to know how the play has gone. She couldn't come herself, as she was ill."

"Ah, of course," laughed the distinguished actor, "I mustn't keep you from your wife. Good-bye, and a thousand more congratulations."

Conyers smiled. It was very sweet to taste such success as this, to hear the congratulations of his fellow-men, to feel the warm clasp of their hands as they met his, and to know that he had made a success in the city where perhaps success is the most difficult thing to obtain—London.

But no kind words from friends must keep him from his wife. To her side he must betake himself and whisper the glad news at once.

Outside the Garrick Club, as he was looking for a hansom, a well-known novelist recognised him and also came up smiling. He held out his hand just as the actor had done.

More congratulations followed. Then with a bright "good-night" the novelist bade him adieu, and five minutes later the author of *Dust and Ashes* was driving along as fast as a cab could take him in the direction of home and—Mildred.

All the way in the cab he was puzzling himself as to how he should convey the joyful tidings. Should he announce it immediately at one stroke, or should it come gradually bit by bit?

Ah, well, it did not much matter how he told her, so long as he told her somehow. He could imagine he saw her cheeks redden with delight as the words fell on her ears; he could see her bosom heaving with joy as the words which proclaimed his success sank into her brain. The happiness of telling her the news, he thought, would be almost greater than the happiness of his triumph itself.

From the waistcoat pocket of his evening clothes he took out the things which he had to show her. First of all there was the programme of the piece, then there was the hurried note in pencil from Golding, the American manager who had made him then and there an enormous offer for the United States right of production, and last, and perhaps best, a tiny note of congratulation from H——, the foremost dramatist of the day, who had sat in a box, and applauded with all his well-known generosity the work of his youthful brother in art. All these treasures he must pour into Mildred's lap when he reached home, and receive from her, what was better than all of them, a smile and a kiss.

He whistled, he clapped his hands, he laughed as the cab sped on. Life just then seemed too happy—a feverish joy sent the blood to his cheeks—it seemed that the gods had nothing more to give him now. Success, fame, and a lovely wife—what more could mortal desire?

He asked no more. He was content to remain thus, thanking God, with all his heart, for his happiness.

His heart beat fiercely as he put his key in the door, and silently let himself into the house. A light was burning in the hall, and without taking the time to divest himself of his hat and coat he rushed into the dining room to tell Millie the news.

Hallo! she was not there. The room was empty. On the table supper was prepared for him, and beside his plate there was a note.

A note, and the writing was Millie's. With a curious feeling shivering through his frame, with eyes that seemed to burn and pain him, he tore open the envelope.

This is what he read as he came home on the night of his triumph. This is what he read—every word searing his soul, and sinking into his heart with icy pain :—

“DEAR WALTER,

“I leave this letter to tell you that you and I will meet no more. I have been tempted, and I have given way. I ought to have resisted, but I couldn't——

“I am sure you will be very successful to-night, and perhaps your success will make up to you for my leaving you.

“I cannot ask you to forgive me. Forget me as soon as possible—that is my prayer.

“ Good-bye.

“MILLIE.”

The letter fell from his hands, and for a long time he stood motionless, trying to realise what had occurred.

As he stooped to pick up the farewell letter, something fell out of his own pocket. It was the programme of his play—the programme which he had brought to show to her. Yes. There it was—“To-night, for the first time, the new play, *Dust and Ashes*.”

A strange smile came over his face—a smile more awful than he who writes can describe. He said, half-speaking to himself and half-thinking aloud—

“*Dust and Ashes!* My play was well named indeed. Earthly success and earthly triumphs mean nothing to me now. Once I longed for them to lay them at her feet—and now—dust and ashes—dust and ashes—dust and ashes.”

And throughout the night he sat in the dim room, saying the same words over and over again.

And that was what happened after the play.

Portraits.

MR. J. L. SHINE.

NEXT to Mr. Harry Nicholls, there is no more popular low comedian, for melodrama at any rate, than Mr. J. L. Shine. His robust humour, his "bustling" method of playing a part for all it is worth, his command of comic gesture and expression, make him a prime favourite with those audiences which like alternately to be harrowed by the most piteous and the most thrilling episodes, and to be moved to laughter, by way of relief, with broad farcical effects. Thus it was no wonder that, having once been "discovered" by the Adelphi management, Mr. Shine made a considerable stay at that theatre and won fresh laurels in each successive part he played. *The Union Jack* was the first piece he appeared in under the Gatti management. This was in 1888, and there he remained, with one brief interval, until the beginning of 1891, when he helped to win favour, both as part author and as comedian, for one of the first of the series of musical farces. The piece which Mr. Shine helped to write was *Joan of Arc*. It was perhaps quite as much on the old lines of Gaiety burlesque as on those of the new kind of *vaudeville*, which is more a miscellaneous entertainment than a definite parody of any particular original. *Morocco Bound*, which followed in 1893, and which owed a good deal of its popularity to his acting and singing, was much more in the later style, and is really to a great extent responsible for the many productions of the kind we have had, really all of these being imitated, to a greater or less extent, from this really amusing framework for the introduction of various "turns." Mr. Shine can therefore claim a considerable share of whatever credit is to be allowed to those who assisted at the birth of a new form of theatrical performance that has been so remarkably popular. But his experiences of melodrama and musical farce, to which of late he has mainly devoted himself, by no means exhaust the record of the actor's career. For instance, he was the manager who, in 1883, produced at the Globe one of the most successful of Mr. Grundy's original plays, *The Glass of Fashion*. Before this he had been associated with Mr. John Hollingshead in the management of the Gaiety, and had also helped to "run" the Empire as a theatre, producing among other pieces *The Lady of the Locket*, in which Mr. Hayden Coffin made one of his first appearances on the stage. Even at an earlier period Mr. Shine had been on tour with Phelps and Adelaide Neilson, and had played under Mr. Charles Reade in *It's Never too Late to Mend*.

"THE THEATRE," APRIL, 1897.



Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.

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MR. J. L. SHINE.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE theatres have suffered materially during the past month from the dual influence of bad weather and Lent, but there is every prospect that the coming season, although likely to be comparatively brief, will be a brilliant one. The festivities attendant upon Commemoration year may be relied on to attract large crowds to London, and theatrical entertainments must necessarily benefit thereby. Managers consequently are busily engaged in making preparations for the early production of novelties with the view of profiting by the expected influx of visitors.

THE MAC HAGGIS.

A Farce, in Three Acts, by JEROME K. JEROME and EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Produced at the Globe Theatre, February 25.

James Grant ..	.. Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH	Black Hamish ..	.. Mr. DUNCAN TOVEY
Gregory Drake ..	.. Mr. H. REEVES-SMITH	Pansy Verrinder ..	.. Miss ANNIE L. AUMONIER
The McGillicuddie ..	.. Mr. BLAKE ADAMS	Mrs. Verrinder ..	.. Miss CLAIRE FAUNCEFORR
Mr. Tadshaw ..	.. Mr. SYDNEY PAXTON	Eweretta ..	.. Miss LAURA JOHNSON
Bull .. ..	.. Mr. GEORGE SHELTON	Jennie Fergusson ..	.. Miss BEATRICE FERRAT

The Mac Haggis is a loosely-constructed, boisterous kind of farce, in which tomfoolery is more conspicuous than wit. Its humours are of the knock-about order which makes no call upon the intellectual faculties, and is easily understood of the people. This is not to say, however, that the piece is without diverting qualities, albeit these betray at every turn their humble origin. Nor does the plot possess any great claim to originality, the ground-idea having already been made to do service in slightly different forms by various playwrights. Indeed, the notion of taking a vulgar little cockney and placing him in unaccustomed surroundings is common to many farces. This is what happens to James Grant, *alias* the Mac Haggis, who unexpectedly finds himself elevated to the position of chief of an unruly and barbarous

clan of highlanders. Being naturally of an extremely timid nature, he is of course plunged by the authors into a sea of troubles from which the bravest man could hardly be expected to emerge in safety. The climax to his embarrassments is put by the necessity he finds himself under of fighting a duel with a brawny highlander, whom, however, by a stroke of good luck, he contrives to defeat. Finally the discovery is made that after all James Grant is not the real successor to the chieftainship of the Mac Haggis, and consequently the little man is permitted to depart unharmed, accompanied by his devoted sweetheart, Pansy Verrinder. The character affords Mr. Weedon Grossmith ample scope for a display of comic despair, in the exhibition of which he is singularly proficient. The portrait is drawn with genuine skill, and is almost pathetic in its intensity. As Pansy, Miss Annie L. Aumônier played with much charm, while Miss Laura Johnson gave an exceedingly vigorous and decidedly clever impersonation of a self-willed tomboy. Miss Beatrice Ferrar was exceptionally good as a highland lassie, while Mr. Blake Adams, as one of the clan Mac Haggis, revealed abilities of a kind that ought to ensure for him a favourable future.

LA POUPEE.

A Comic Opera, in Two Acts, by MAURICE ORDONNEAU, the English adaptation by ARTHUR STURGESS.
Music by EDMOND AUDRON. Produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, February 24.

Lancelot	Mr. COURTICE POUNDS	Madame Hilarius	Miss KATE MILLS
Father Maxime	Mr. NORMAN SALMOND	Henri	Miss ELLAS DEE
Chanterelle	Mr. CHARLES WIBROW	Jacques	Miss PIERRETTE AMELLA
Loremoïs	Mr. ERIC THORNE	Marie	Miss KATE HERMANN
Balthazar	Mr. W. CHEESMAN	Alesia	Mlle. ALICE FAVIER
Hilarius	Mr. WILLIE EDOUIN		

Not for a long time has a prettier or a daintier piece than *La Poupée* been seen upon the London stage. Success instantaneous and emphatic accompanied its first performance. The circumstance may be accepted as indisputable evidence that, whatever may have been said or thought to the contrary, the public is still ready, and even eager, to accept simple, wholesome, and delicate work at the theatre. In this instance the author has been as fortunate in the choice and treatment of his subject as the composer has shown himself capable of wedding it to spirited and melodious music. Happily, also, the adapter has accomplished his part with taste and ingenuity, the result being a singularly pleasing entertainment. The fable invented by M. Ordonneau is as quaint as it is novel. A young novice, on the eve of becoming a monk, informs the brotherhood that a fortune awaits him if

only he will consent to take unto himself a wife. The Superior meanwhile learns that a certain Hilarius has succeeded in manufacturing dolls so lifelike in appearance and all their movements as practically to be indistinguishable from human beings. So, to secure the fortune for himself and his impoverished brethren, he authorises Lancelot to venture forth once more into the world, purchase one of these famous puppets, and go through a mock form of marriage with it. Unluckily the doll selected by the youthful monk has been damaged, and Alesia, the manufacturer's charming daughter, takes its place. When, therefore, Lancelot returns to the monastery with his newly-made bride, imagine his dismay, which, however, quickly changes to keen delight, on discovering that his wife is not a wooden puppet, but an exceedingly sweet and fascinating young girl. This bare outline of the story gives but the faintest idea of the many whimsical incidents with which the piece is crowded, and of the skilful use to which they are put. Suffice it to say that *La Poupée* is a little masterpiece of delicate and healthy humour. In the part of Hilarius Mr. Willie Edouin literally revelled, investing it with a comicality and a sense of drollery quite unsurpassable. As Alesia Mlle. Alice Favier, although entirely unknown to English playgoers, achieved a veritable triumph by her graceful and piquant acting and exquisite vocalisation. Mr. Courtice Pounds as Lancelot and Mr. Norman Salmond as Father Maxime also captured the suffrages of the audience. Indeed, to the entire company nothing but praise is due.

SAUCY SALLY.

A Farce, in Three Acts, adapted by Mr. F. C. BURNAND from *Lx Flamboyante*. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, March 10.

Herbert Jocelyn ..	Mr. CHARLES H. HAWTREY	Perkins ..	..	..	Mr. H. DEANE
Captain Jocelyn ..	.. Mr. W. T. LOVELL	Mrs. Lambert ..	..	..	Mrs. CHARLES CALVERT
Percival Chudleigh ..	.. Mr. F. VOLPE	Rosie Jocelyn ..	..	..	Miss JESSIE BATEMAN
Ulysses Jeffson ..	Mr. WILFRED DRAYCOTT	Hannah ..	..	..	Miss DORIS TEMPLETON
Evan Evans ..	.. Mr. ERNEST COSHAM	Jane ..	..	..	Miss VIOLET CRAVEN
Jack Buncombe ..	.. Mr. ERNEST HENDRIE	Cecile ..	..	..	Miss MAUD ABBOTT

Saucy Sally is unquestionably the best vehicle Mr. Charles Hawtreys has had for a long time past for the display of his peculiar qualities. Everybody knows that in the character of a facile liar he stands supreme. In the matter of cool effrontery, of saying the thing that is not with an air of absolute conviction, Mr. Hawtréy is unrivalled. As Herbert Jocelyn he enjoys opportunities in this respect that certainly ought to satisfy not only him but his warmest admirers. With the rising of the curtain he starts upon his headlong course of mendacity, which is

only brought to a conclusion at the end of the last act. The farce itself, it has to be admitted, bears traces of having been pigeon-holed for fifteen years ; but as, despite its somewhat old-fashioned air, it affords abundant grounds for merriment, the fact is of no great importance. The Saucy Sally is a vessel which Jocelyn has invented to account for his frequent absences from home, during which he is supposed by his wife and mother-in-law to be engaged in navigating distant seas on behalf of the Mercantile Marine Exploration Company. In point of fact he is all the time snugly ensconced in chambers in London, paying his addresses to a pretty little music-teacher called Cecile. Discovery is threatened by the appearance of a hearty old salt, Jack Buncombe, whose life has been saved by another Jocelyn, captain of an existing Saucy Sally. In this way the suspicions of Mrs. Lambert, our hero's mother-in-law, are aroused, and she determines that she and her daughter will accompany Jocelyn, as far as Southampton at any rate, on the occasion of his next voyage. This project is carried into effect, and in the second act the entire party is found in Southampton at the Anchor Hotel, whither also comes Cecile in pursuit of her lover. To what straits Jocelyn is put in order to satisfy everyone it is not difficult to imagine, especially as at this juncture the real Captain Jocelyn also turns up. Happily, having lied himself into the dilemma, the false captain of the Saucy Sally succeeds in lying himself out of it, and all ends pleasantly for the peccant husband and his unsuspecting wife. Of Mr. Hawtrey's superb performance we have already spoken. To Mrs. Charles Calvert is due unstinted praise for her masterly portrait of Mrs. Lambert, as also to Mr. Ernest Hendrie for his capital sketch of Jack Buncombe. Mr. W. T. Lovell made a dashing young officer, and the remaining characters were in good hands. The farce was preceded by *Byeways*, a rather pretentious little play by Mr. George S. Payne, which, although revealing a certain amount of promise, suffered from the author's evident lack of stage experience.

THE LADY LAWYER.

An Operetta, in One Act, by G. D. LYNCH. Composed by J. W. IVIMEY. Produced at the Garrick Theatre, March 8.

Justitia Temple, née Pepper	Dick Temple	..	..	..	Mr. SHALLARD
Miss MARY COLLETTE	Eugene Tripp	..	..	..	Mr. F. WALSH
Sylvia Golding Miss K. ADAMS					

Mr. G. D. Lynch is evidently a novice at writing for the stage, or he would have made better use of the fairly happy idea con-

tained in *The Lady Lawyer*. As it is, the little piece suffers from clumsy construction and dialogue of which the point is not always apparent. Justitia Temple, in days that are still to come, has set up as solicitor, in order that she may give employment to her husband, who is himself a barrister. In their different capacities they are visited by a couple, Miss Sylvia Golding and Mr. Eugene Tripp, who desire to retain their services in a breach of promise case the latter wishes to bring against the former. After a considerable amount of sparring, the pair settle their differences amicably, and go off arm in arm. The best thing about the piece is the music, which, without being in any sense original or striking, is at any rate bright and fluent. The operetta owed little to the efforts of the players.

THE MARINERS OF ENGLAND.

A Romantic Drama, in Four Acts, by ROBERT BUCHANAN and CHARLES MARLOWE. Produced at the Olympic Theatre, March 9.

Lord Nelson and Bronte ..	Mr. W. L. ABINGDON	Old Trip	Mr. JULIUS ROYSTON
Admiral Talbot ..	Mr. FREDERICK STANLEY	John Marston	Mr. TOM TAYLOR
Admiral Collingwood ..	Mr. W. H. BROUGHAM	Harry Dell	Mr. CHARLES GLENNEY
Captain Hardy ..	Mr. ADAM ALEXANDER	Mabel Talbot	Miss KEITH WAKEMAN
Captain Lebaudy ..	Mr. HERBERT SLEATH	Nelly Dell	Miss FLORENCE TANNER
Tom Trip	Mr. E. M. ROBSON	Polly Appleyard	Miss EDITH BRUCE.

There is really little in *The Mariners of England* to distinguish the piece from any of the various melodramas annually produced in London with the ultimate view of sending them into the provinces provided with a metropolitan *cachet*. Messrs. Buchanan and Marlowe's play hardly, indeed, demands criticism, save of the kind given to the humblest description of stage work. It is a rough-and-ready and, in its way, not ineffective drama abounding in familiar situations and crammed with patriotic sentiments calculated to appeal successfully to pit and gallery. That it possesses any literary or artistic value, even the authors, we fancy, would hardly contend. With frank disregard for historical accuracy they introduce Lord Nelson into their story as a *deus ex machina*, who is ever ready to protect virtue in distress, and to punish villainy as it deserves. Nor have they hesitated to invent incidents in his career for which the spectator will search the authorities in vain. Their plot is, in point of fact, mainly concerned with the adventures of a dashing young sailor, Harry Dell, who is accused of an attempt upon Nelson's life, and who, in place of facing the charge, foolishly flees to France, thus leaving the real perpetrator of the crime, one Captain Lebaudy, triumphant. Between the two men, moreover, there

exists a keen rivalry for the hand of pretty Mabel Talbot, who, after the fashion of all heroines of melodrama, favours her humbler suitor. Eventually Harry returns to take his trial, and is only saved by the intervention of Nelson himself, who, it appears, was in the secret of his innocence all the time. Harry, as a reward for virtue, is at once made lieutenant, and sails with his protector to join the fleet at Trafalgar. Then we have the scene of the battle of that name, and of Nelson's death in the cockpit of the Victory. In the last act Harry is restored to the arms of his sweetheart. Mr. W. L. Abingdon gave a clever and interesting portrait of England's great naval hero, and Miss Keith Wakeman a pleasing impersonation of Mabel Talbot, while Mr. Charles Glenney delivered the hero's rhetorical lines with volcanic vigour. Miss Florence Tanner and Miss Edith Bruce were both admirable, and as Captain Lebaudy, Mr. Herbert Sleath created an excellent impression.

IN PARIS.

Messidor, at the Opéra, is a lyrical drama in four acts, by M. Emile Zola, music by M. Alfred Bruneau. The scene is laid, in M. Zola's own words, in the Country of Bethmole-Ariège. The plot is founded on facts, founded also on local legend. First the legend. Hidden in the rocks, undiscovered by man, there lies a fair and spacious shrine. There, enthroned on his mother's knee, the infant Jesus plays with the tiny source of the river of Bethmole, and the sands He touches are turned to gold and flow thus laden to the outer world. Now the simple facts. The villagers of Ariège were modestly rich in possessing a stream the sands of which yielded gold when washed, and were open to all alike. But suddenly ruin came to the peaceful villagers by the erection of a factory damming up their river, and thus taking away their means of livelihood. With need and hunger arose revolt and the desire of revenge, for Gaspard, the mill-owner, was a man of their own village, who knew well the harm he had done to his fellows. Then appears the love incident. Guillaume, one of the anarchist leaders, has been in love from childhood with Hélène, Gaspard's daughter, who, having become rich through her father's success, is considered too good a match for him; but who, loving him, wishes that poverty may overtake her and facilitate her marriage. Just when Guillaume is on the point to lead his followers to attempt the destruction of the mill, the

Fates intervene and grant Hélène her wish. The rocks from which the waters flow fall in, the course of the river is changed, the mill-wheel is stopped, the machines stand still, and Gaspard is ruined. The villagers retire to their former occupation; the fields again grow fertile. Guillaume marries Hélène, and peace reigns supreme. The young and talented composer has obtained a signal success in his musical rendering of this pretty story. The music reminds one of the immense influence Wagner is exercising on contemporary music in France. The chief parts were handled by MM. Alverez, Delmas, and Renaud.

At the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, *La Cloche Engloutie*, by Gerhard Hauptmann, translated by M. Ferdinand Hérold, is a piece in which the good and evil genii, fairies, gnomes, and elves play with the fate of the hero. The plot is real and stirring, and the piece worthy of a more elaborate *mise-en-scène* than it could receive for a single performance. The hero, Maître Henri, has devoted all his energies and powers of artistic invention to design a bell which is to be placed in a mountain chapel. On its way to the belfry the malevolent genius, jealous of all human attainment, causes an accident which throws the bell into the lake, and its author is dangerously hurt in trying to save his *chef d'œuvre*. Wounded and despairing, he finds his way to a lonely mountain hut, inhabited by a sorceress, whose young granddaughter, a beautiful fairy, nurses him. Restored to health and hope by her care, he falls in love with her, and when he leaves she follows him. Regenerated by her love, and imbued with fresh youth, he achieves great things in his art; and just when he thinks the summit of fame is reached he hears the sound of his submerged bell, and with the sound comes back the long-forgotten reality, the neglected duties, and the remembrance of the old family life. In the sudden revulsion of feeling he reproaches his fairy love bitterly, and leaves her, only, however, to return and die in her arms. There seems a deep, hidden allegorical meaning in the play. Does the author intend to show us that the absolute absorption of an artistic being in his genius precludes all other ties and duties? He sets before us, with great poetic beauty in the original, the truth that the perfect ideal is just beyond our grasp, but never within it. Still, beautiful as the piece is, it is not quite adapted for the Paris theatre-goer, even including those whom M. Lugné Poë is educating in such pieces. The piece without the text to read is difficult to follow, and it was not appreciated here as it probably otherwise would be.

A la Vie! A la Mort! a drama in five acts, by M. Pierre Denis, at the Nouveau Théâtre, and *La Carrière*, in four acts, by M. Abel Hermant, at the Gymnase, represent the one political and

the other diplomatic life in the French capital. The former frankly places the leaders of the Boulangist movement without disguise on the stage. In the latter it was left to the imagination of the spectator to fill in the name he liked. This is the phase of dramatic development which follows in natural order, the representation of well-known restaurants and ladies' tailors' dressing-rooms! We shall return to M. Abel Hermant's play in next month's article.

IN BERLIN.

Many attempts have been made within the past few years to introduce into fiction the character of Jesus Christ; a few have been made to represent that character upon the stage. The most recent of these latter experiments has been ventured upon by the eminent dramatist Wilbrandt. He has not, it is true, dared to go all lengths. He has changed the name, and has slightly antedated the period; but in all essentials the protagonist of his new lyrical drama, *Hairan*, is the Founder of the Christian religion. The name of this central character is Hairan, a mystic and a saint, who has issued forth from his native surroundings in search of peace—the peace of God. In the course of his wanderings he excites the passionate admiration of a beautiful girl named Lysilla, who endeavours by all the arts of a charming and voluptuous nature to win him for herself. She fails, for her seductions are futile in the presence of that deeply spiritual nature, which has set above all earthly delights and treasures the realisation of God within himself. Angered by the stranger's impassiveness, maddened by the *spretæ injuria formæ*, she abandons herself to the revels of a Bacchanalian festival, and is found at last dishonoured and fallen. Then Hairan again appears upon the scene. The peace he sought for has come to him; the revelation of which he stood in need and expectation has been vouchsafed, he is the Lord of adoring multitudes who seek his aid to heal and save them. Lysilla's father, Diagoras, a philosopher, has learnt the story of his daughter's shame, and implores Hairan to save her from degradation by espousing her. The request remains ungranted, and Lysilla becomes an outcast. Still, drawn by some magic in the person of the object of her passion, she watches him, and is witness of a miracle which he works upon a cripple. In a moment the sinfulness of her nature is purged away, and with ecstasy and deep repentance she falls at Hairan's feet. The

story ends with the martyrdom of Hairan. He is stoned and beaten to death, and expires in the arms of Lysilla and his disciples. Of course, the character of Lysilla is that of Mary Magdalene. It is a fine piece of dramatic work, and would move the most cynical to admit that morality is something more than an empty word. As for Hairan, the resemblance between the incidents in his career and those of the Gospel story are sufficiently marked to identify him with the Saviour, even without the extraordinary likeness which the actor who personifies the character bears to the traditional portraits of Christ. The part was acted by Herr Sommerstorff with a dignity and skill which won for him boundless applause, while that of Lysilla was played with infinite charm by Frau Gessner-Sommerstorff. The play was produced at the Berliner Theater, and is a Lenten sermon of the most impressive kind.

Another play, brought out at this theatre a few days before *Hairan*, is *Der Gymnasial-Director*, by Eugen Zabel and Alfred Bock. It is a drama in four acts, and deals with school life in Germany. The head-master of a public school for boys dismisses an assistant master for a supposed intrigue with a beautiful widow, the mother of one of the boys at the school. The boy's father was a convict, and is seen in the course of the play that the widow is sadly afraid her son will follow in his father's footsteps. This actually comes to pass, but the fault is not so much that of the boy as of an evil companion under whose influence he has come, owing to the ostracism in which he is placed by his school-fellows, who shun the lad because of his father's shame. The end of the whole matter is that when the facts have been explained to the head-master he offers to marry the widow and to take the erring lad into his home, with a view to reclaiming him. How much moral courage this requires in a provincial town, where the people are of the most censorious disposition, may be imagined. There is thus plenty of scope for the dramatists, who were aided in their work by an excellent cast.

Shakspeare's *Henry IV.* has been given at the Royal Schauspielhaus. On the occasion of the first performance there was a very brilliant gathering, which included the Emperor and Empress; and the piece, although it dragged in parts, was greeted with all those tokens of appreciation which Shakspeare's plays have so long been accustomed to win from German audiences.

Ludwig Ganghofer's *Meerleuchten*, a drama in four acts, which has been successful in Vienna, has been drawing good houses at the Lessing Theatre. It is the story of a land proprietor who has married a young wife named Elschen. The Baron Robert Von Wangen's whole soul is in his estates, and he leaves his wife

very much to her own devices. She is quite happy until her old playmate, Fritz Von Wängen, the young brother of the baron, comes home from sea. He is a captain now, and cuts a brave figure in the eyes of his little friend Elschen, who once upon a time used to call him "Fritz, dear Fritz." The couple have not been alone very long before their boy and girl love returns, and they fall into each other's arms. Fritz, however, is a good fellow. He realises his mistake as soon as he has approached the edge of the precipice, and the young wife helps him to escape from the temptation which threatens them both. He invents a plausible excuse for sudden departure, and the incident is closed, as they say in the Chamber of Deputies. There is not a dull moment in the whole play. At the Berliner Theater a crowded house gave a cordial welcome to *Der Sohn des Kalifen*, by Ludwig Fulda, which was fully described in *The Theatre* at the time of its production in Vienna a short time ago.

IN VIENNA.

At the Carl Theatre *Der Cognac-König* (*The Cognac King*), adapted by Victor Léon and Ludwig Held from Scribe and Bayard, has been rewarded with cheers and wreaths and flowers. It is a comic opera in three acts, and the music is by Franz Wagner. The authors have hit upon a merry theme, which, in its easy treatment, reminds one of the libretto of the *Fledermaus*. In wartime a certain count receives an unwelcome visit from a troop of the enemy, because he has contravened the law of war. The countess helps him to escape, by disguising him as a commercial traveller. The count disappears, and a commercial traveller known as the Cognac King is captured in his stead, under the impression that he is the offender. The rest of the plot depends on the not unfamiliar mistake in identity. From the outset the anxiety of the audience is set at rest as to the danger of the Cognac King being shot in place of the count. Thanks to the successful way in which the character of the count as commercial traveller is treated, there is no impatience in the theatre, for the spectators are kept amused with various witticisms of a diverting character. The music is good on the whole, and contains many catching airs.

Das Tschaperl, by Hermann Bahr, produced at the Carl Theater, was treated as a literary event, and rightly so. Hermann

Bahr is the leader of Young Vienna, and he is moreover an uncommonly good fellow. He calls his *Tschaperl* a Vienna piece, and so it is in a very real sense, for, although it treats of a state of things which certainly is not confined to Vienna, it does so from the Viennese point of view and with great success. It is the story of a gifted woman, whose talents enable her to retrieve the fortunes of an unsuccessful husband. The wife composes an opera, which the husband, himself an unsuccessful composer, manages to steer to a successful production. He makes the fortune of his wife, but subsequently becomes known merely as her husband. The fame which the lady achieves awakens his jealousy, and thereby comes the shipwreck of their married life. The author has worked his plot up in such a way that the conviction is borne in upon the spectator that no reconciliation is possible. Yet when the piece comes to an end a reconciliation is effected, and this gives an unsatisfactory conclusion to the piece. The happy ending is unhappily contrived, and the situation fails to carry conviction with it. There is another blemish in the play, due to the fact that the author has introduced a second husband who possesses a successful wife. This lady is of a statuesque beauty, and her charms upon the stage, where she appears as a singer, obtain for her an invitation to supper from the King of Macedonia. The husband is of a sufficiently contemptible type to see advantages likely to accrue to himself from the dishonouring patronage of his majesty of Macedonia. As the king and the opera singer appeared together on the stage there was a loud whispering of names in the auditorium. As chance would have it, there was an ex-king in one of the boxes, who felt that he was laughed and stared at during the scene in which the King of Macedonia appeared.

Lebenswende (*The Turn of Life*) by Max Halbe, the author of *Jugend* (*Youth*), has been played at the Raimund Theatre. Much interest had been excited by the announcement that this new work by the author of the forbidden *Jugend* was about to be produced. The expectations aroused were not gratified by the result, which proved *Lebenswende* to be an unsatisfactory play. It even excited ridicule, and at the fall of the curtain there were loud sounds of disapproval.

Die Schwalben (*The Swallows*), brought out at the Theater an der Wien, is a comic opera by a new composer, Leo Held, conductor of the orchestra at the Leopoldstädter Theatre. This young man—he is only twenty-three—has achieved a triumph which will unquestionably stand him in good stead in the future. His operetta was received with immense applause, and deservedly so. As it is fresh, tuneful, and thoroughly suited to the taste of the

Viennese public, there can be no doubt that it will have a long and successful run.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

The month of March has shown a marked falling off in dramatic matter of any particular standing. In opera the production most worthy of notice is that of *La Collana di Pasqua*, a work which had already made its first public appearance a few months ago on a Neapolitan stage, but was now submitted to the criticism of Milan. The composer of the music is Signor Gaetano Luporini, a young *maestro*, who established a reputation among his countrymen a few years ago by his *I Dispetti Amorosi*, and the libretto is from the pen of Signor L. Illica. *La Collana di Pasqua* is written in the Tuscan dialect, and its plot turns upon the eternal subject of marital infidelity. A certain Drea is the *amant* of a married lady named Pasqua, and receives from her a token of affection in the form of a necklace. Falling in love with Nanna, a younger and more charming woman, and, being on the point of marrying her, he returns the necklace to Pasqua without any explanation. She, however, will not accept it, and sends it back again by Nastagia, an old woman in the secret of her guilt. The passing to and fro of the necklace between his wife and some unknown person is brought to the knowledge of Cleto, the heroine's husband, but he is a man of an unsuspecting and trustful temperament, and is easily satisfied by a little exhibition of inventiveness on the part of the elderly messenger. When eventually the wedding takes place, Pasqua is overwhelmed by a feeling of mortification at the loss of her lover, and at the same time is brought to a healthy sense of shame by the complete confidence of her husband. The plot is thus of the simplest character; but the piece, helped out as it is by pleasing melodies, has passed muster, and may be expected to make its way on to other Italian stages.

IN MADRID.

Los Plebeyos, by Señores Francos Rodriguez and Gonzalez Llana, was produced recently at the Teatro Español with great success. The scene is laid in the country residence of Don

Ignacio Resal, a wealthy farmer, whose son Isidoro is in love with Inés, the daughter of the Count of Corbellon. Inés has another passionate admirer in her cousin Gandarias, who resolves to prevent at all costs her union with a member of a plebeian family. Becoming possessed of the fact that Don Ignacio had undergone a term of imprisonment for killing a man who slandered his wife, Gandarias informs the Count that the father of the man who proposes to become his son-in-law is a convict, and Don Ignacio, when seen by the Count on the subject, confirms the statement, but gives the facts of the case. A duel subsequently takes place between the young men, and Isidoro being killed, the old father, in a moment of passionate grief, strangles Gandarias. The drama is well written, and the authors deserved the success with which they were rewarded.

IN NEW YORK.

THE production of a stage version of Mr. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at the Fifth Avenue Theatre is the event of the month in New York, as much by reason of the world-wide renown and popularity of the novel as by the instantaneous success achieved by Mrs. Fiske as the pathetic figure of Tess Durbeyfield. That she realises the Tess of the story few will admit. But as a mere histrionic feat the performance stands very high, while the acting which leads up to the murder, filling in blanks left by the author, greatly helps the understanding to a clearer view of the character, and smooths away its apparent inconsistencies. Mrs. Fiske was helped considerably by Mr. Lorimer Stoddard's adaptation. At many points the artistic needs of the story were sacrificed to the more prosaic necessities of the player. The adapter has shown an amount of skill sufficient to make a stirring play, which will be certain to delight the few who have not read the book, but which will be equally sure to disappoint the thousands who know its every character and its every incident. The latter will sorely miss the simple, loveable figure of Angel's father, one of the few truly consistent characters in the story. The former will be spared the hot and oppressive atmosphere of Talbothays, and the chill horror of Starveacre farm. The sojourn of Tess and her husband in the uninhabited house, similar in artistic value to the bedchamber scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, before Romeo's flight to Mantua, is not insisted upon by

the adapter with the poetic sense that prompted Mr. Hardy in devising it. The final tableau of the play is the arrest of Tess on Salisbury-plain in the early morning, a fine scene, marred somewhat by a judicious arrangement of the prehistoric cromlechs. Mr. Charles Coghlan impersonates Alec D'Urberville with all the necessary languor, cynicism, and recklessness, the brief period of his conversion being too short for the audience. As Angel Clare no actor could distinguish himself; it is to Mr. E. M. Bell's credit that he did not fail in it.

Never Again is the title of a three-act farce, adapted from the French of MM. Desvallières and Mars, produced at the Garrick Theatre early in the month. It has the usual French flavour, and, being well acted by a company including Mr. E. M. Holland, Mr. Fritz Williams, and Miss May Robson, is in great favour.

The Mayflower, a three-act comedy by Mr. L. N. Parker, deals with the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers and their adventures in their new country. It is every whit as pretty and poetical as *Rosemary*, but has not the same dramatic force. Mr. Parker's charming dialogue grows more delightful with every play he gives us, and a graceful prologue in the Elizabethan and Restoration fashion was spoken before the rise of the curtain.

Echoes from the Green Room.

IF any additional proof of the hold which Sir Henry Irving has gained upon all classes of playgoers were needed, it would have been supplied at the Lyceum on February 27th, when, recovering from the effects of his accident towards the end of last year, he reappeared as Richard III. All parts of the house united in cheering him, and for at least three minutes he was unable to go on with the opening soliloquy. At the end of the performance, in reply to calls for a speech, he mentioned the fact that it was the birthday of his friend and colleague, Miss Ellen Terry, and asked the audience to join him in wishing her many happy returns of the anniversary. It is quite unnecessary to add that the request was enthusiastically complied with.

Madame Sans-Genie will be produced at the Lyceum on Saturday, April 10th.

SAD news for those who, like Mr. Morley Roberts, otherwise Stanley Jones, complain that the actor receives too much consideration in English society. Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Tree, and Mr. Alexander were among a dinner party invited by the Duke and Duchess of Fife to their house in Portman-square at the beginning of February to meet the Prince of Wales.

SIGNORA DUSE has been very ill, but hopes to be able to fulfil her engagement in Berlin next winter.

MR. WILLARD's latest tour in America is one of the most successful he has yet had; here and there, indeed, he has beaten his own record. Last month he opened a five weeks' engagement at Chicago.

MR. PARKER and Mr. Murray Carson have two plays in preparation for Mr. Wyndham.

MME. CALVE has undertaken to appear in M. Massenet's *Sapho* in Paris next season.

M. LASSALLE, instead of returning to America next year, will remain at his brick manufactory near Paris.

MR. HARE has won a distinct success in America, but his return to that country next season will depend largely upon whether he is able to obtain a fine play.

MR. CHARLES WARNER has obtained the rights of *Under the Red Robe* for Australia, where he will appear in it next season.

MME. NORDICA, after a successful concert tour in the United States, returned to New York towards the end of February, and will shortly leave for Paris to sing at the Opéra there. It is not probable that she will be heard at Covent Garden this season. "When Mr. Grau was made manager of Covent Garden last summer," she says, "I was the first person he came to. I said to him that I would be glad to sing with him, and do all I could to help to make his season a success. I accepted the terms he proposed, and in my contract it was stipulated that I was to appear as Isolde and Brunnhilde in *Siegfried*. The Wagner parts were those in which I had been successful, and it was a condition of my appearance there that I should sing those rôles in addition to the parts usually assigned to a dramatic soprano. Now conditions exist which make it seem positive that I shall not have the opportunity to sing those rôles. In view of this, my contract at Covent Garden is not binding."

SIGNOR MASCAGNI has sold the London rights of his latest opera, *Iris*, for about £2500. He took to the libretto very much, and could hardly be induced to seek any rest while composing the music. He often jumped out of bed to note a melody that had occurred to him.

His Majesty had scarcely been produced when Mr. George Grossmith disappeared from the cast. Interviewed as to this, he stated in effect that the part he played was very different at the end of the rehearsals from what it was at the beginning. One thing is really beyond dispute. He was out of his element in the piece, which, clever as he is, gained rather than lost by his absence, and is now going much better.

REFERENCE has been made to a body of "anti-Burnandites." Probably they consist in the main of disappointed contributors to *Punch*, who herd together on the first night of any play by the editor of that always welcome paper.

MR. FORBES ROBERTSON is about to undertake yet another provincial tour, during which he will be seen as Othello.

WHEN the run of *Black Eyed Susan* ends at the Adelphi, about the middle of May, the theatre will be occupied for a short time, before Mme. Sarah Bernhardt opens there on June 21, by *Secret Service*, a drama of the American Civil War, which has been very successful in the States. It is by Mr. William Gillette, the author of that very popular piece *Held by the Enemy*. Mme. Bernhardt will appear in De Musset's *Lorenzaccio*; M. Sardou's latest effort, *Spiritisme*; *La Tosca*, *La Dame aux Camélias*, which is to be made a "costume play" and "dressed" in the style of the Third Empire; and *L'Etrangère*, in which she has not been seen since she was over here with the Comédie Française company many years ago. M. Guitry and M. Darmont, both of whom are well known in England, will be her principal supporters.

ONE of our valued contributors, the Baroness von Zedlitz, sends to the *Deutsche Revue* an account of a conversation she has had with Miss Ellen Terry, chiefly with regard to Signora Duse. "Although," said the great English actress of the great Italian actress, "we cannot talk fluently to each other, we became fast friends on the evening of our first meeting. I had seen her in *La Dame aux Camélias*, and was so overpowered that I sobbed aloud. She heard that I was present, and asked me after the performance to come and see her on the stage. Our meeting was in accordance with our emotional temperaments. She rushed towards me across the stage, and I fell weeping into her arms. The tears were a great relief.

I could not have expressed my admiration better than by my tears. Later on we spent many a pleasant hour together, and I came to love her as a sister."

MISS TERRY once met the Abbé Liszt. "You cannot imagine," she said to the Baroness, "how sorry I am I cannot talk German fluently, and never have I regretted it more than the evening Abbé Liszt came to us to supper. I sat next to the dear old gentleman without being able to talk to him. Yes, but I remember I *did* talk German that evening—just five little words, which, however, seemed to please the Abbé greatly. He had been present at the representation of *Faust*, and teased me about being a Margaret who could not speak German. I thought of how I might meet his raillery, and said, after a while, 'Lieber Liszt, ich liebe dich.' (Dear Liszt, I love thee)."

MR. L. N. PARKER, part author of *Rosemary*, has, of course, been interviewed in America. "I came into this world," he said, "at a little town on the coast of France. My father was a New Englander, so you may see that I am a child of different languages, qualified to steal plays in various tongues. You might add that the event mentioned occurred just forty-four years ago. Play-writing I have been at only eight years. I was what is called in England a public-schoolmaster. My début as a playwright was purely accidental. We were a band of amateur actors of the very worst sort, employing a barn for a theatre, and I wrote a play for our own use. A strolling dramatic company that came along, seeing a copy of my production at the town print-shop, sagely concluded that it might be good business to present my work, and thereby appeal to local pride. The play, a three-act comedy, entitled *A Buried Talent*, proved successful and eventually attracted the attention of Ben Greet, of whom you must have heard. Mr. Greet presented the comedy at a matinée in London, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, then a comparative stranger to the public, but a wonderful actress then, as now, played the leading part as only she could play it. Managers at once became anxious about one Parker, and ever since that matinée I have been writing for the stage. All this talk concerning difficulty in reaching managers seems to me ridiculous—at least, such has not been my experience. The manager knows what he wants, and if the right thing is put before him it will be welcomed. In England, at least, when a play is refused there must be something wrong about it, if it has been presented to the proper manager. You do not offer farce-comedies to the London Lyceum, and I do not believe in the so-called fashions in plays. The public will go at any time to see a good play, no matter of what kind."

MR. EDWARD TERRY, who lately had an invitation to appear with his company at Sandringham, has received from the Prince of Wales as a souvenir of the visit a ring with "A. E." in diamonds, surmounted by a coronet in other precious stones.

IN Professor Max Muller's *Reminiscences*, lately issued, there are some characteristic stories of Tennyson. One day he called upon the philologist in his little bandbox of a house at Oxford. "Wishing to show the great man all civility, we asked him to dinner that night and breakfast the next morning. At that time almost all the shops were in the market, which closed at one o'clock. My wife, a young housekeeper, did her best for our unexpected guest. He was known to be a gourmand, and at dinner he was evidently put out by finding the sauce with the salmon was not the one he preferred. He was pleased, however, with the wing of a chicken, and said it was the only advantage he got from being Poet Laureate that he generally received the liver-wing of a chicken. The next morning at breakfast we had rather plumed ourselves on having been able to get a

dish of cutlets, and were not a little surprised when our guest arrived to see him whip off the cover of the hot dish and to hear the exclamation, 'Mutton chops ! the staple of every bad inn in England !'

It was generally after his dinner, when smoking his pipe and sipping his whisky and water, that Tennyson began to thaw and to take a more active part in conversation. On one occasion at his house the question of tobacco came up. "Some of his friends taunted Tennyson that he could never give up tobacco. 'Anybody can do that,' he said, 'if he chooses to do it.' When his friends still continued to doubt and to tease him, 'Well,' he said, 'I shall give up smoking from to-night.' The very same evening I was told that he threw his pipes and his tobacco from the window of his bedroom. The next day he was most charming, though somewhat self-righteous. The second day he became very moody and captious, the third day no one knew what to do with him. But after a disturbed night I was told that he got out of bed in the morning, went quietly into the garden, picked up one of his broken pipes, stuffed it with the remains of the tobacco scattered about, and then, having had a few puffs, came to breakfast all right again. Nothing was said any more about giving up tobacco."

LAST month, under the presidency of Mr. George Alexander, a meeting was held at Londonderry House, Park Lane, to promote the interests of the Rehearsal Club, which aims to provide rest and recreation and refreshment for players who find it inconvenient and expensive to be in town by day as well as by night. Mrs. Tree made a very sympathetic speech on the occasion. "I," she said, "can lie down in my dressing room; others cannot afford the double journey to and from the theatres in which they play, and are compelled to wander into coffee-houses to fill up their time." The Duchess of Teck was one of those present at the gathering.

WHY should Mme. Bernhardt give up to international politics what is meant for art? During an entr'acte of *La Tosca* at the Renaissance last month, she entered a protest against the course taken by France in conjunction with the other Great Powers in regard to Greece, "our spiritual mother." Possibly she may carry many of our sympathies with her; but it is at least probable that M. Hanotaux, the French Foreign Minister, is better acquainted with the facts of the situation.

MR. TREE will open Her Majesty's Theatre on April 18th, not with *Julius Cæsar*, as had been expected, but with *The Seats of the Mighty*, which has been rather adversely criticised in America. In *Julius Cæsar* it is understood he will play Cassius. One thing at the new theatre will be *Chind d'Habits!* with Mr. Charles Lauri and his wife at the head of the cast.

The Princess and the Butterfly, by Mr. Pinero, and *The Physician*, by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, will be brought out at the St. James's and Criterion respectively as the present number of *The Theatre* is going through the press. The former contains no fewer than thirty characters, the most important of which will be played by Miss Julia Neilson, Mr. George Alexander, Miss Fay Davis, and Mr. H. B. Irving. The cast of *The Physician* includes Mr. Wyndham, Miss Marion Terry, Miss Mary Moore, and Miss Carlotta Addison.

IN our opinion, as we said last month, there is no valid reason why historical figures should not be presented on the stage. It must be admitted, however, that Admiral Field is strongly supported in his protest in the House of Commons against the production of *Nelson's Enchantress*. "I think," a correspondent writes, "that a veil ought always to be drawn over

the follies and failings of the illustrious dead. They lived two lives, the one public and the other private, which ought to be respected and treated as such." Shakspeare, for one, did not take that view.

DR. IBSEN is again to the fore. The Independent Theatre have arranged to play next month *The Lady from the Sea*, *The Wild Duck*, *A Doll's House*, and, "if possible," *Ghosts*.

MISS ADA WARD has left the stage to join the Salvation Army. If one account of this change may be accepted, she attended one of Mr. Booth's services, felt a touch upon her shoulder, and, on looking round, found herself, as she believed, in the presence of Our Saviour. On the following evening she distributed her wardrobe and jewels among her comrades. This, at any rate, was an improvement upon the example of the enthusiast who, becoming a teetotaller, smashed over a thousand bottles of fine old port instead of sending it to the hospitals.

MR. GEORGE MEREDITH's essay "On Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," originally delivered as a lecture at the London Institution in 1877, and published in April of that year in the *New Quarterly Magazine*, has been reprinted by Messrs. Constable, and is a very welcome addition to the list of his books. It contains much subtle and searching criticism, and can be read with complete enjoyment from first page to last by the student of literature and the drama. Passing under review the few great comedy writers the world has known—and how few, indeed, they have been—the essayist awards the palm to Menander in ancient times, and to Molière among the moderns. Of the artificial comedy of Restoration and later times he will have none, though Congreve's style wins praise, and Millaumont a tribute of admiration. Since then, up to the date of the composition of the essay, no English comic writer (using the word in Mr. Meredith's sense) has written for the stage at all.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his essay on "The Literary Influence of Academies," spoke of the great superiority of the hack-work of literature in France to that in England. To a great extent the reproach upon our country is still deserved. Across the Channel they take more trouble over their works of reference, and get them up so well that they do not, at any rate, bear so patently as ours the stamp of the "biblion a-biblion," to use Charles Lamb's phrase for "books which are no books." No neater or more compact little volume could be desired, for instance, than M. Jules Martin's *Nos Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques*, which gives brief biographies and portraits of all the playwrights and operatic composers who are in the least degree well known in France. The photographs are reproduced exceedingly well, and the book is interesting as well as useful.

MR. ALBERT CHEVALIER purposes returning to the stage from the music-halls, where he has been for so long and reaped such a rich harvest of success. He has himself written a comic opera called *The Land of Nod*, which he intends to produce in the provinces when the autumn comes, and then put on at a London theatre. He has just finished a very profitable tour in the United States.

THERE is talk of a collected edition of Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays being published in a couple of volumes. The one which has been acquired by the Haymarket managers—*You Never Can Tell*—may be produced this season, or may be held over until next. It depends upon the drawing powers of *Under the Red Robe*, which is still doing very well. Mr. Shaw's piece is at yet in rehearsal.

A COPYRIGHT performance of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was given the other day at the St. James's Theatre.

MISS MAUD MILLETT, who has retired from public life upon her marriage, is a decided loss to the stage. She was the typical "English girl" of our theatre, and in such parts as Minnie in *Sweet Lavender* and Maud in *Sunlight and Shadow* she was exceedingly good. For more exacting work she was not so well suited, and her Ellean in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was scarcely one of her successes. Her charm of manner had much to do with her popularity, which was great with all playgoers, and especially at Oxford and Cambridge, where it used to be said that "no undergraduate's rooms were properly furnished without a photograph of Miss Maud Millett."

THE next production at Terry's Theatre, under Mr. Arthur Playfair's management, will be *On Leave*, an adaptation by Mr. Fred Horner, of a French farce called *Le Sursis*. It is founded on the old idea of a gadabout husband pretending that he is on military service when he wants to take a little holiday from home.

THEATRICAL charities benefit to a very large extent by the will of the late Mr. Henry Betty, the son of the "infant Roscius," whose death we announced last month. He had always been a good friend to the theatrical profession, and the good that he has done will live long after him. The will gives £5000 to the Royal General Theatrical Fund, with another £5000 on Mrs. Betty's decease; £500 to the Dramatic and Musical Sick Fund, with a similar sum to follow as in the previous case; and the whole of the residuary estate, after due provision has been made for the testator's wife, is to form "Betty's Fund for Poor Actors and Actresses." This fund will probably amount to about £56,000, and as Mr. Edward Ledger and the other executor have renounced probate, it will probably be administered eventually under the direction of the Court of Chancery.

IT is not only Members of Parliament whose bicycle accidents get into the papers. Mr. Hermann Vezin had a "spill" the other day in Wellington-street, and was fair game for the paragraphists. Fortunately, he was not much hurt, and has now recovered from the ill effects of his mishap.

SIR GEORGE NEWNES will preside at the next yearly dinner in aid of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, to be held on May 18th.

IN Mr. Shiel Barry, who died on March 13th, in his fifty-fourth year, we lose a genuine artist. Of Irish parentage, he passed his boyhood in Australia, went on the stage in his teens, and obtained a footing in London by his performance of the Doctor in Dion Boucicault's *Rapparee* at the Princess's in 1870. He achieved a distinct success at Drury Lane as Harvey Duff in *The Shaughraun*, and even a greater at the Folly as Gaspard, the miser, in the English adaptation of *Les Cloches de Corneville*. The latter performance was really nothing less than a work of genius. Of late years, however, Mr. Barry confined his work almost exclusively to the provinces.

IT is diverting to take note of the hubbub raised in one or two quarters by the extract we gave last month from the *Newcastle Daily News*. One might have thought that the meaning of the passage could not be misunderstood. Actresses, whose good name was so pointedly defended, are not quite the only class of women threatened with degradation.

THE death is announced of Mr. Wilton Jones, playwright, journalist, and husband of Miss Gertrude Warden. He was only forty-three years of

age, but had done a large amount of work, especially in the way of pantomime writing.

AN ingenious editor at Wigan has devised a comparatively novel form of advertisement. "We are requested," he says, "to contradict the rumour, which seems to have gained general credence, that the falling-in of the wall at the Grand Opera House, Liverpool, was due to the crowded state of the theatre during the visit of Mr. Preston's *Secret of the Harem* company. This is not so, and, although the house was nightly packed with a crowded and enthusiastic audience, nothing occurred which could in any way affect the stability of the structure."

MR. F. KERR, who is with Mr. John Hare in America, has secured two excellent plays, which he intends to produce, in conjunction with Mr. H. T. Brickwell, on his return to this country.

MR. CLEMENT SCOTT half promises us what should be a valuable contribution to the literature of the stage. Under the title of *The Wheel of Life*, he has issued in a volume a collection of his fugitive contributions, mostly autobiographical, to the *Whitehall Review*. "If," he says, "the public is pleased with this preliminary canter in the way of reminiscences of a very busy life, perhaps they will back me when I start seriously upon a most important book which will contain all that I remember of my life." While dissenting from some of Mr. Scott's opinions, we are sure that such a work would arouse even more interest than is taken in his *Thirty Years at the Play*, which every good theatregoer is pleased to possess.

The Wheel of Life includes Mr. Scott's papers on stage fights, *Caste* and old Bohemian days, "prudes on the prowl," and criticism versus personality. As many of us can remember, Chatterton, the manager of Drury Lane, writhed under any sort of criticism. In 1869, it appears, he not only tried to keep Mr. Scott out of the theatre, but was insolent enough to demand his dismissal from the post of dramatic critic to the *Weekly Dispatch*. . . . "The next dodge was to ensure my extinction by cutting off the theatrical advertisements." It is hardly necessary to add that he got a "thorough good snubbing" for his pains.

"PRECISELY the same course," says Mr. Scott, "was pursued the other day, when almost exactly the same thing occurred, I being impudently advised by a well-known manager with a swollen head to send a deputy to do my work, and hand on my tickets to somebody else, as fairness with me was out of the question." For the bed of the dramatic critic is not always one of roses.

CHATTERTON, we remember, attached no little importance to the length of notices. "Never make it less than a column," he almost pathetically entreated Oxenford on one occasion.

ABOUT twenty years ago it was quite a regular thing on a first night to hear Mr. James Mortimer, the then editor of the *Figaro*, hissed by the pit and gallery, on account of some too outspoken utterances in his paper. Mr. Scott wrote the articles, but Mr. Mortimer, with characteristic loyalty and good faith, insisted upon taking the whole responsibility upon himself. According to Mr. Scott, Mr. Mortimer is "still suffering from the consequences" of that brave act. "Wanting the other day some slight favour done in the matter of the production of a very excellent play, he was refused on the ground that he was 'obnoxious to the pit and gallery.'" For ourselves, we doubt, as Mr. Scott does, whether such a prejudice really exists.

SIGNOR MANCINELLI administers a rebuke to anyone wanting in catholicity of taste as to music. "The field of opera," he writes, "is very large, and art may be expressed in more than one single form. I think the greatest enemies of art are those exaggerated persons who attach themselves to one particular cult, and wish to annihilate all other music. In my opinion we must accept as masterpieces, Rossini's *William Tell* and *Barbière*, and Verdi's *Falstaff* and *Rigoletto*, just as we accept Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and Wagner's *Tristan* and *Meistersinger*."

LONG known in the provinces, especially at Bath, as a theatrical manager, Mr. Frederick Neebe died last month at a comparatively early age. He became an actor in 1860, and in the following year, at Nottingham, was clown to the harlequin of Mr. Wilson Barrett. He had a turn for pleasantry, as when, on announcing a performance of *Hamlet*, he omitted to give any of the cast except one—"First gravedigger, Mr. Frederick Neebe."

Henry Esmond, Mr. Pemberton's adaptation of Thackeray's novel, was produced at the Edinburgh Lyceum on March 5th. It is a very clever piece of work, accomplished under no ordinary difficulties, and was admirably played by the company headed by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Compton. It ought to be tried in London.

Salamambo is to be revived at the Paris Opéra before long.

Frédégoude and the *Bataille de Dames* are in active rehearsal at the Comédie Française, Mme. Worms-Baretta undertaking for the first time the part of the Comtesse d'Antreval in the latter piece.

THE success which attended the first production of M. Sardou's *Spiritisme* at the Renaissance was not to last very long. The comedy has already been withdrawn, its place being taken by a revival of *La Tosca*.

M. LAVEDAN's new comedy, *Catherine*, has been unanimously accepted by the committee of the Comédie Française, together with *Les Fossiles*, by M. Du Zurel.

Mlle. REICHENBERG, we regret to state, is expected to leave the Maison de Molière next October.

Messidor will probably be succeeded at the Paris Opéra by an elaborate revival of *The Huguenots*, which is already in rehearsal. *Briseï* is to be one of the principal things here during the coming season.

L'Eau Merveilleuse, by M. Albert Grisar, is to be revived at the Opéra Comique.

MME. MOREAU, long to be remembered as the original Louise in *Les Deux Orphelines*, so deftly adapted to the English stage by John Oxenford, died in Paris last month, aged forty. She had a singular command of pathos.

THE latest of the independent theatres in Paris is the Théâtre Chrétien, otherwise the Théâtre Corneille. While it has no definite religious object, this house will give no pieces in which the seventh commandment is broken, or the marriage tie discussed freely, or in which persons have the bad taste to commit suicide. The programme of the directors is, however (or perhaps we ought to say "consequently"), by no means unattractive, since it will consist of classical revivals, and the production of plays by English writers, such as Mr. Pinero and Robertson. The "tea-cup and saucer" drama will be rather a novelty to Parisian playgoers.

UNDER the title of *La Musique Française Moderne*, M. Georges Servières has printed some thoughtful studies of César Franck, Edward Lalo, Jules

Massenet, Ernest Rozer, and C. Saint-Saëns. He holds the first of these to be superior to the last, and is of opinion that the third has met with more than his deserts. That the studies have been made in a spirit of impartial criticism there can be no doubt, however much we may dissent from some of the writer's conclusions.

OLD playgoers in Paris still speak with something like affection of Mlle. Cornélie Falcon, who recently died at the age of eighty-five. Educated at the Conservatoire, she appeared at the Opéra with brilliant success, but completely lost her voice a few years afterwards. Only once again did she reappear in public, and then only to find that her career as a singer was hopelessly at an end. The unfortunate singer burst into tears during the performance ; and most of the audience, we are credibly assured, were not far from doing the same.

THE Paris Conservatoire has acquired possession of Gluck's *Arbre Enchanté*, written for the Court of Maria Thérèse on the basis of a sketch supplied by Vadé to the theatre of the Foire Saint Laurent about 1738, and played at Versailles during the composer's visit to Paris. It was last heard in 1867, at the Théâtre des Faintaisies Parisiennes.

THE censorship is being exercised with greater vigour than ever on the continent. Herr Sudermann's *Morituri* has been suppressed at Carlsruhe by the commandant, on the ground that it exhibits a military officer in an unfavourable light.

It has been laid down by the Spanish authorities that "no titles of nobility are to appear on playbills," so that if scions of the aristocracy appear on the stage they must drop all the handles to their august names. The edict was provoked by an application made to the Council of State by Don Fernando Diaz de Mendoza, Count of Lalaing, grandee of Spain, for leave to act under his own name, style, and title. The bearer of this high-sounding patronymic is a young man of twenty-six, son of a marquis, brother of a countess, and brother-in-law of a duchess, who has taken to the stage. But the Council would not grant his petition, and the order mentioned above is the direct result of it.

AN excellent dramatic critic writes to us as follows:—"If Dr. Ibsen were to produce a play written entirely in words of one syllable, there is little doubt that his admirers would at once proclaim this to be the only form of dramatic composition that could appeal to the really intelligent student of the theatre. *John Gabriel Borkman* (his latest effort) is, taken as a whole, even weaker than *The Master Builder*. After two excellent acts, in which there is unfolded what seems likely to be an interesting study of misguided human nature, the play goes absolutely to pieces, and at the close leaves the reader wondering how a drama that began so well could end so feebly. Yet what do the followers of the master say about it? Words can scarcely express the admiration they affect. Mr. Walkley, for instance, in the *Daily Chronicle*, sums it up as the 'most piteous and poignant tragedy of gray hairs since *Lear*.' No doubt Mr. Walkley thinks this kind of verdict impresses people with the belief that he must be a very wonderful person to see so much where they can see so little ; but to sane critics what nonsense it is ! Regarded as an acting drama, no manager in the world would give it a second thought were it not that Ibsen's name has so great an effect upon those who would fain be thought cleverer than their fellows. As literature, it is spoilt entirely by the utter collapse of its interest after the second act. It almost seems as if the author had made a determined effort to get away from vague, misty 'symbolism,' and really

write a sound drama of human interest ; that he had kept up his resolution until his task was half complete ; and that his less sane tendencies then overcome him, turning aside the sharp edge of his purpose and blunting his capacity to finish as he had begun."

"JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN is a disappointed man. A great financier, he yielded to temptation when hard pressed, was denounced by a friend, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The only property he respected when he was laying hands on all he could was that of his wife's sister. To her he had once been engaged, but he gave her up in order to secure from a rival (whom she detested, and who never profited by his bargain) some commercial advantage. He lives in the upper part, his wife in the lower rooms, of a house placed at his disposal by the woman he cast off thus shamefully. The Borkmans have one son, a foolish, invertebrate creature, who has been brought up by his aunt, and who goes off in the third act with a widow a good deal older than himself and a young girl whom the widow takes for the youth to 'fall back upon when he is (*sic*) done with me and I with him.' These, with an old clerk who imagines himself a poet, and who pays regular visits to Borkman in his seclusion, are all the characters. The two first acts are taken up with introducing them and explaining their relations one to another. All that can be said about the other two is that Borkman becomes all of a sudden apparently insane, declares his intention of going out again 'into the storm of life, and trying to make his way back to 'freedom and life and human beings, and eventually dies of heart disease, accelerated by the cold on the top of a hill, where his very unpleasant wife and her hardly-treated sister clasp hands over his body and make unintelligible remarks, upon which the curtain falls. The play, in short, exhibits in its first half all Ibsen's good qualities—his power of quickly creating an interest in his characters, his terse, nervous dialogue, his dramatic intensity of style ; while the second half shows up all his weaknesses and defects."

THE play has led to a violent quarrel, by the way, between its author and Bjørnsen, the novelist, who imagined that he saw in the references to Borkman's relations with the lawyer Hinkel an allusion to his own dispute with a deceased Norwegian minister of state. In fact, Bjørnsen seems to have declared the whole drama to be intended as an attack upon him. As his daughter is married to Ibsen's son, the "family jars" resulting from such an accusation are of a very unseemly nature. Dr. Ibsen has denied that there is any foundation for Bjørnsen's assertions ; but it would be really very amusing if "the most pitiable tragedy of grey hairs since *Lear*" should turn out to be merely a skit written by one man of letters in order to trip up another.

THE prospects for the next season of opera in New York are favourable enough. Among those who will reappear there are Mme. Eames, M. Jean de Reszke, his brother, and M. Plançon. Whether Mme. Calvé and Mme. Melba will be seen with them is at present uncertain. Possibly Mme. Nordica may join the company.

GRAND Opera has not been prosperous of late, Mme. Melba and Mme. Eames being too ill to appear. Mme. Calvé did her best, but apparently with little effect. On one occasion, when *Marta* was played, there were more people on the stage in the fair scene, a local paper states, than in front.

MR. NELSON WHEATCROFT, a popular actor in New York, died of pneumonia last month at the age of forty-three. By birth an Englishman, he

gradually drifted to the American stage, where he came to be regarded as one of the best representatives of heavy parts. He was the husband of Miss Adeline Stanhope, long the principal member of Mr. Barry Sullivan's company. In his youth Mr. Wheatcroft joined an evening elocution class at the Birkbeck Institute, as did Mr. Pinero at about the same time.

ONE of the New York managers lately invited the clergy of the city, with their families, to his theatre, assuring them that the entertainment, as usual, was "thoroughly pure." The house, of course, was full, so great is the attraction of free admission. According to the *Mirror*, a feature of the audience was the average number—six—of the families. One clergyman wrote for eighteen seats, three for sixteen each. However, all were welcomed without reference to consanguineous details, and the performance was unanimously applauded.

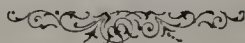
It is quite clear that the stage in the United States is generally in a far more prosperous state than it was a year ago.

MME. NORDICA, interviewed by a representative of the *New York Herald*, emphatically denies that the salaries paid to opera artists are excessive. "The public," she remarks, "should consider the time and money and labour expended in preparation for an operatic career. In the case of a woman the ordeal is particularly severe, and this severity does not abate with the arrival of the artist at a successful *debut*. She must struggle to keep her place, and if she satisfactorily fills the parts assigned to her her work is all the harder and more exacting. When the artist is ready to assume his part upon the stage, there should be an equalisation of everything. No one man or woman can carry an opera to a successful termination. If an Isolde of a given merit is sung to a Tristan of the same artistic standing, there should be an equal distribution of honours. The man should not be placed above the woman, nor the woman above the man. This applies as well to the salaries paid as to the honours and applause awarded. One singer should not be paid a salary three or four times that which another is paid who sustains an equally difficult rôle. The expenses of the artist in the United States are greater than in Europe. . . . The operatic labourer is well worthy of his or her hire. Success comes only after years of struggle and hard work, and the fruits are not always long-lived. There should be an equalisation of operatic salaries on the basis of artistic merit."

THE death is announced in New York of a once well-known tenor, M. Ashille Errani, who supported Mme. Patti in America nearly forty years ago. Long after she became famous he devoted himself to teaching, one of his pupils being Mme. Minnie Hauk.

MR. J. E. DODSON, whose acting as Richelieu in *Under the Red Robe* has done so much to secure the success of that piece in New York, has received offers to head a company in the United States, but has elected to remain with Mr. Charles Frohman as leading comedian and character actor at the Empire Theatre for another year.

* RECENT PORTRAITS *



IN

The Theatre.

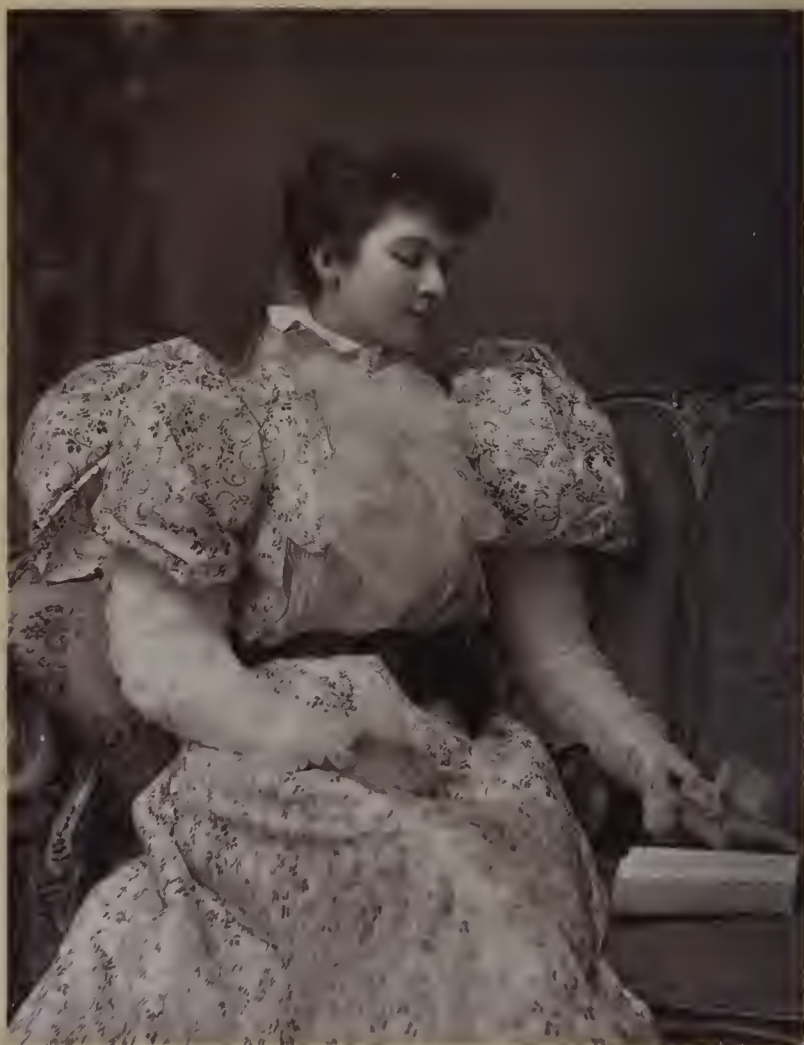


Sept. 1894, Miss JULIA NEILSON	and Mr. FRED TERRY.
Oct. „ Miss KATE RORKE	„ Mr. E. S. WILLARD.
Nov. „ Miss OLGA NETHERSOLE	„ Mr. LEWIS WALLER.
Dec. „ Miss WINIFRED EMERY	„ Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.
Jan. 1895, Miss VIOLET VANBRUGH	„ Mr. JOHN HARE.
Feb. „ Miss JESSIE BOND	„ Mr. ARTHUR BOURCHIER.
Mar. „ Miss ELLEN TERRY	„ Mr. HENRY IRVING. *
April „ Miss MARION TERRY	„ Mr. WILLIAM TERRISS.
May „ Madame PATTI	„ Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL.
June „ Madame BERNHARDT	„ Mr. HERBERT WARING.
July „ Miss MARY MOORE	„ Mr. ARTHUR CECIL.
Aug. „ Miss GENEVIÈVE WARD	„ Mr. EDWARD RIGHTON.
Sept. „ Mr. & Mrs. WEEDON GROSSMITH	„ Mr. GEORGE CONQUEST.
Oct. „ Miss AILSA CRAIG	„ Mr. & Mrs. BEN WEBSTER.
Nov. „ Miss MAY YOHE	„ Mr. & Miss SOMERSET.
Dec. „ Miss DOROTHEA BAIRD	„ Mr. BEERBOHM TREE.
Jan. 1896, Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON and Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL	„ Mr. & Mrs. H. V. ESMOND.
Feb. „ Miss LENA ASHWELL	„ Mr. & Mrs. EDMUND MAURICE
Mar. „ Miss MAUD JEFFRIES	„ Mr. WILSON BARRETT.
April „ Miss ROSINA FILIPPI	„ Mr. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
May „ Miss LILY HANBURY	„ Miss ESMÉ BERINGER.
June „ Miss EVELYN MILLARD	„ Mr. CHARLES WARNER and Miss GRACE WARNER.
July „ Miss OLGA BRANDON	„ Mr. CHARLES FULTON.
Aug. „ Mrs. BEERBOHM TREE	„ Mr. LIONEL BROUGH and Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.
Sept. „ Miss CLARA JECKS	„ Mr. JAMES FERNANDEZ.
Oct. „ LADY MONCKTON	„ Mr. GEORGE GIDDENS.
Nov. „ Miss MILLWARD	„ Mr. W. L. ABINGDON.
Dec. „ Miss ELLIS JEFFREYS	„ Miss ELLALINE TERRISS.
Jan. 1897, Mr. & Mrs. BANCROFT	„ Miss MARIE TEMPEST.

* In his robes as D.L. (exclusive to "The Theatre").

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"THE THEATRE," MAY, 1897.



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MISS FAY DAVIS.

THE THEATRE.

MAY, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

COMING LATE TO THE PLAY.



THIS, of course, is an old story. People have come late to the play from time immemorial. Some have made a point of doing so from a desire to excite attention, if not admiration. If a well-known man or a pretty woman desires a cheap advertisement, he or she cannot do better than struggle into his or her seat in the stalls of a theatre just after the curtain has gone up. Many are aware of this, and habitually seize the opportunity for personal display. They must know perfectly well that they earn thereby the execration of their neighbours and the audience generally. But the mischief we delight in physics scorn; the advertisement is obtained, and is delighted in.

It is admitted that late arrival at the playhouse is not invariably deliberate. It is not even always the result of laziness or indifference. It is often unavoidable. It may be the outcome of delay on the railway or in the street. Your train may have been blocked; your cab or carriage may have had to make an unexpected detour. You may even have been the victim of an accident or a "casualty." You may have started with the best of intentions, in what appeared to be ample time; and yet fate may have thwarted you. Your train may have been stopped by fog, or your cab horse or carriage horses may have slipped and fallen. All this will be conceded. But it is no reason why playgoers who are in their places when the curtain first rises should be put to inconvenience by the tardy entrance of others. It is no reason why the players should be disconcerted just as they are entering on their task.

Late-comers have been treated too leniently in the past. A fellow-feeling makes playgoers wondrous patient, and the consciousness that they have on occasions been late themselves renders them over-considerate to other sinners. The time has come, however, for a new policy to be pursued. What has always been a nuisance is degenerating into a scandal, and must be dealt with drastically and firmly. The evil must be legislated for and crushed. It is of no use to trust absolutely to the

courtesy or kindness of theatre-goers; there are certain to be black sheep among them. Take a case in point. A day or two before the production of *The Princess and the Butterfly*, Mr. Alexander took the trouble to address the ticket-holders a personal request—one might almost call it an appeal—that they would be in their seats before the beginning of the play. What was the result? When the first words of the dialogue were spoken, there were still numerous gaps (as we can testify) in the stalls, where late-comers necessarily create the largest measure of commotion. Moreover, among the delinquents were individuals closely connected with the profession—persons who, you would have supposed, would have specially sympathised with the management, and would have made a point of responding to its appeal. Such persons, we are sorry to say, are among the most persistent and conspicuous offenders in this matter of late-coming.

One likes to think that the extent of that distress and annoyance is not fully realised by the average late-comer. Yet a little reflection should suffice to convince even the most careless. There is, to begin with, the physical discomfort produced by those who squeeze their way, rapidly and heedlessly, between narrow and crowded rows of seats. It is impossible, nowadays, for much room to be accorded for the purposes of locomotion under such conditions; and the result is the grazing of knees, the treading upon toes, the dislocation of back-hair, the disturbance of coats and wraps, the abrading of the best of tempers. Late-comers are an evil everywhere—whether in gallery, in upper circle, in pit, or what not. But they are especially an evil in the stalls, not only because what disturbs the stalls disturbs almost equally the pit, not only because movement in the stalls must necessarily catch and annoy the eye of everybody in the auditorium, but because this part of the house is nearest, in effect, to the stage, and consequently nearest to the players, upon whom all such unsettlement must needs have a regrettably unnerving influence. Such an influence it must have on any occasion, but particularly must this be the case on the first night of a piece, when the players are already sufficiently discomposed without having any addition to their normal troubles in that respect. What hampers an actor injures proportionately the author whom he is trying to interpret and the management whose interests he is endeavouring to serve. In a word, your late-comer is not only an intolerable bore; he is an enemy to the public and private weal, and should be treated accordingly.

The time, we repeat, has come for taking drastic measures—measures in which, we feel sure, theatrical managements would have the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of playgoers. After all, it is for the good of everybody—of every

individual seat-holder, as well as of the actors, the authors, and the managements—that the scandal of late-coming into an auditorium should be suppressed. In all the best concert-halls there is a rule, which is strictly adhered to, that no one shall be admitted to his place among the audience during the performance of any item on the programme. If a song is being sung, the late-comer must wait in the corridor till it is over. If a movement in a sonata or concerto is being played, the late-comer must stay outside till the movement is completed. And if this policy can be applied to musical performances, why not to dramatic? For the latter, peace and quietness are surely as important as for the former? In a sense, they are even more important, for often the entrance of a late-comer will prevent those whom he passes from hearing or seeing some necessary element of the play. The doors leading into the auditorium of the theatre should be closed directly the curtain rises on an act, and not opened again till the curtain falls at the end of that act. It is craved that late-comers might at least be permitted to stand at the side of the stalls, or circle, or what not, till the act is finished; but it is to be feared that if this concession were made the continual opening and shutting of doors would still fret those who were in their seats.

It might be necessary, at first, to admit late-comers to the auditorium; but they should not be allowed to take their seats until the next curtain-fall, and, for our own part, we should be inclined to detain them in the corridors till the act was concluded. The scandal, we may point out, relates not only to the disturbance made at the beginning of the play, but to that which accompanies every subsequent raising of the curtain during the performance. Between the acts many men go to the foyer, or the smoking-room, or the refreshment bars, from which they do not always return until the play is again under weigh. Result—precisely the same kind and amount of annoyance as is caused by those who are too late for the first rising of the curtain. This is partly owing to the imperfect warning given to the playgoers, in some theatres, of the imminent beginning of a new act; sometimes no warning is given at all. But that is not the point. The point is, that those who are seated when the curtain is drawn up, either at the commencement of the piece or at the beginning of subsequent acts, ought not to be worried by the incursion of the dilatory. The evil, we say again, is a crying one, and one with which the managements should make haste to grapple. Why should they not unite in instituting such a regulation as we have suggested? If such a regulation were in force in every theatre no one could complain; while the well-behaved playgoer would be delighted, the nervous actor would be grateful, and the anxious author and manager would have one cause less for alarm.

Portraits.

MISS FAY DAVIS AND MR. HERBERT WARING.

IF one were asked suddenly to name two of the most notable individual performances to be seen at the present moment on the London stage, one's mind would of course fly at once to the Lyceum. But, to put on one side *Madame Sans-Gêne*, it would be difficult to think of any two more remarkable than the Fay Zuliani of Miss Fay Davis in *The Princess and the Butterfly*, and the Gil de Berault of Mr. Herbert Waring in the Haymarket version of *Under the Red Robe*. Miss Davis has taken a very short while to establish herself as a favourite with English audiences. It would have been strange indeed had it been otherwise, for her natural gifts, in conjunction with her undoubted merits as an actress, give her a charm and a fascination that cannot fail to have their effect. It is only a few years since Miss Davis came to England from the United States to try her fortune as a reciter. But her ability for the stage was too apparent for the stage not to claim her as its own, and in November, 1895, she made her first appearance in *The Squire of Dames* at the Criterion Theatre, establishing her reputation immediately as an actress with undoubted gifts for comedy. From the Criterion she passed to the St. James's, where, after playing for a short time the part of Madame de Maubas in *The Prisoner of Zenda*, she won all hearts as Celia in *As You Like It*. In a representation that was full of charm her performance stands out in the memory as little less delightful than Miss Julia Neilson's Rosalind, and it was especially refreshing to those of us who have seen the part too often played in a perfunctory, half-hearted manner, as if it were of little value to the actress, and of little importance to the play. In Mr. Pinero's brilliant comedy, Miss Davis has again been the recipient of the warmest praises, and, as the past has been full of success, so the future is full of promise to this young actress, whose talents are as unmistakable as her use of them is tasteful, conscientious, and refined. Of Mr. Waring's career we spoke in some detail in these pages two years ago. Always versatile, he reveals in *Under the Red Robe* a genuine aptitude for romantic acting. He seems to possess the enviable secret of being able to please in any form of drama that happens for the moment to be most popular, and it is pleasant to think that, whatever turn the taste of the public may take next, we are sure to find him well to the front.

"THE THEATRE," MAY, 1897.



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MR. HERBERT WARING.

IN *UNDER THE RED ROBE.*

The Round Table.

SIR HENRY IRVING'S RICHARD III.

BY SIR EDWARD RUSSELL.

IF the affairs of the nation could be directed with full intelligence, one theatre at least, managed as the Lyceum Theatre is now managed, would be subsidised by the State. The difficulties are obvious and the idea is Utopian, but one cannot help wishing that the difficulties could be overcome and that the thing were practicable. The production of standard masterpieces is an onerous, costly, and risky undertaking. Yet who can deny that it is of the first importance? The Lyceum management has incited the managements of the Haymarket Theatre and the St. James's Theatre to worthy emulation, and it is an open secret that a new Hamlet is likely to challenge public judgment at the first opportunity in the person of Mr. George Alexander, whom everyone will wish good speed in the undertaking. But in view of the changes—perhaps one might say the degradations—of public taste, there is an unpleasant feeling that production of standard plays is attributable rather to managerial enthusiasm than to public demand; and that the supply of entertainment of this highest class is always liable to cease. Up to now, however, there has been no such cessation of it as even the most exactly intellectual playgoers can complain of, and the latest Shaksperian revival was so splendid alike in decoration and in acting that it might well create a renewed and emphatic public desire for the multiplication of such triumphs.

Richard III. was first played by Sir Henry Irving about twenty years ago, and his conception of the part was distinguished by brilliant and, till then, unrealised truth. In the old Richards there was too much of Richardson's show. Before Garrick's time the performances of the character were stilted in a manner then thought classical. From Garrick's time they were melodramatic. There was no very valid objection to this, because the play is melodramatic. There is in it, besides other melodramatic traits, which were much aggravated by Colley Cibber's telling

tags, that compression of action which excludes the visible gradual operation of motive; so that when Princess Anne is induced in a brief and terse dialogue to marry the murderer whom she hates, the effect even in reading is that dramatic probability has been melodramatically disregarded; and similar excuses for a merely melodramatic rendering of Richard abound throughout the play. Nor need the melodramatic style of the pre-Irving Richards be exaggerated, though their comedy was meagre and artificial. Charles Kean and Barry Sullivan had their sardonic moments. But it was left for Irving to present a vivid and convincing picture of a villain almost entirely made up of humour—so humorous that cruelty is a sincere amusement to him—a royal rascal compounded of humour, magnetism, cruelty, and mimetic power. This is the true Richard Crookback of Shakspeare. Looking back over Sir Henry Irving's career, it is an extraordinary record that he has up to the utmost tidemark of modern thought satisfied the world with entirely new and entirely true "creations" of Hamlet, Shylock, and Richard. For our own part we would confidently add Macbeth, and as confidently declare that his Othello surprised the candid by wonderful and corrective new lights on the character of the Moor; but we admit that as yet we are in a minority on these points. As to the Richard, there is no difference of opinion.

Of course, there must be something gruesome about such a personage and his doings. But we have to accept the theory of the chronicler and the dramatist that, though Richard's remorseless character was pretty well known, he got his way and held his own until Richmond beat him in the field. The cue of explanation is given in the opening soliloquy, where Irving buoyantly expresses in the sunshine and with a sunny face the villainy which he means to practise, and on that cue—the cue of humorous enjoyment—he acts throughout, as cajolement, treachery, malignity, and barbarous cruelty alternate in horrible yet curiously entertaining variety. To follow the character through the splendidly and truthfully represented historic scenes of the play is of course impossible, and only by seeing the representation can any idea of its supple and elastic and drastic humour be got—only thus, moreover, can it be realised how this humour, never mere antic or out of the classic key, strengthens the play and raises it towards the higher drama to which its diction belongs. But we shall mention three illustrative points. All playgoers of any standing can remember the mechanical manner in which the proposal scene with the Lady Anne used to be performed. The spectator had to take all for granted and to look on at a see-saw of hate and condonation in which it was

impossible to believe. Sir Henry Irving makes the scene almost entirely credible. At all events, his amusement at the situation, his powerful and winning predominance, make it impossible wholly to disbelieve in the effect that is being produced. The thought that there may have been such a man, and that he was capable of such an achievement, gets into the half-amused, half-horrified mind, and cannot be dislodged. Then, observe how a scene with which Richard has comparatively little to do is lit up by Irving's humorous conception. The old Richards in the Court scene, where so many of the illustrious wrangle, vapoured about and strutted and worked their eyebrows and hoisted their humps and displayed their knotted legs and forced themselves into prominence. Irving sits thoroughly enjoying the railings of his royal relatives at each other, and at the point where the discussion comes loudest and nearest and most offensive to him goes to a table and, hearing everything all the time, writes out a warrant of arrest. Our last point is one of contrast. Richard is alone in his tent the night before Bosworth. What has come to him? He walks the walk of an old man. He stoops. He almost totters. He moves heavily and feebly, and a helpless fretfulness seems unchecked to have infected his very gait. The reason? He is alone; much battered, much worried, at a troublesome crisis, and—nobody is looking. Thus in this shambling contrast there lives, as in the reverse of a medal, the full meaning of all the high-spirited, revelling devilry which he has kept up before the world. It is one of the greatest things in the impersonation, and we believe has never before been thought of. Old playgoers will perhaps miss more than they will care to confess the good old melodramatic points of Cibber; but they will perceive a rare elevation of the style and of the theme produced by returning to the text of Shakspeare under the illumination of one of the most wonderful pieces of acting of our, and probably of all, time.

A NOTE ON "MAKING UP."

BY ARTHUR WILLIAM A BECKETT.

WHEN it was announced that Sir Henry Irving intended to appear as Napoleon the Great, a feeling of curiosity was universally aroused. The public were accustomed to see our greatest actor in a variety of characters. The lessee of the Lyceum was an excellent Becket, a capital Louis XI., an ideal Charles I., ut all these impersonations permitted latitude as to height.

Archbishop Thomas was several inches over six feet ; but this was a detail known only to antiquaries, and the proportions of the king-hypocrite and the martyr-monarch were more or less guess-work. All three of them were believed to be of the average stature. But the Corsican hero stood on different ground. He, "the little corporal," was known to be five-foot-two. How would the lofty stature of Irving adapt itself to the almost dwarf proportions of Bonaparte ? A few nights ago the question was answered. With the assistance of the costumier and the perruquier Sir Henry contrived to deprive himself of his commanding height and to shrink into the shape of the Conquered at Waterloo. It was a *tour de force*, but completely successful. "How it was done" has been explained in many columns. By padding the legs and increasing the length of the body by broadening the shoulders and hips and wearing a well-contrived wig much was managed. But this was not the last word. The actor's genius supplied what was wanting. The outer man came from the shops, but the mind from Sir Henry himself. The combination was irresistible. "Good gracious ! why it *is* Napoleon !" was the cry on that historical Saturday night at the Lyceum, when the lessee and Miss Ellen Terry showed "all London," for the first time in English, Madame Sans-Gêne and "the Corsican."

Perhaps the most famous Napoleon of the past was Gomershal, the delight of the small wits of the forties. He it was who donned, to the delight of the pit at Astley's, the grey overcoat and black hat which are recognised all the world over as the sartorial characteristics of Wellington's rival. Then, after a long pause, came the late Mr. Ben Webster, whose grandson, by the way, is in the present cast at the Lyceum. The ex-lessee of the Haymarket appeared in a play in which he had to masquerade as Napoleon. The impersonation only lasted a quarter of an hour, and the resemblance was obtained with the assistance of the customary costume and the traditional attitudes. Then, after another long pause, came Miss Charlotte Saunders, who appeared at the Strand in the days of the Swanborough management as the Abdicator of Fontainebleau in *The Latest Edition of the Lady of Lyons*. This clever actress of burlesque was supported by Mr. John Clark, who, at the moment of her change from Claud to Bonaparte, himself became the double of Louis Napoleon. "Oh ! my prophetic soul !" commented the representative of the last of the French Emperors, "my uncle !" Then again, after a pause, came Mr. Harry Jackson. and later still Mr. Carson. But it will not be unfair to all these clever players to say that they have never touched Irving mark. For the future, Napoleon on the stage will be associated with Sir

Henry—at any rate in England. And his success will bring the art of “making up” into greater prominence than ever. Perhaps the most wonderful change artist (using the words not in the conventional sense) is Mr. Beerbohm Tree. The lessee of Her Majesty’s Theatre, as Sir John Falstaff, is something wonderful. Naturally slim, he looks, when got up as the portly knight, the apotheosis of obesity. By the way, this character has more than once attracted amateurs to the professional boards, when those amateurs have had their weight to back them. This was certainly the case with Mark Lemon and “Arthur Sketchley.” The first editor of *Punch* and the creator of “Mrs. Brown” were both genial and both extremely stout. They neither of them required making up, so at the request of friends they put their names in the playbills for Falstaff, and in each instance with indifferent success. In the provinces many went to see Mark Lemon out of curiosity. They had heard of him as editor of *Punch*. George Rose had less to fall back upon. As an entertainer he was well known. His *Mrs. Brown in Paris* and *Mrs. Brown at the Play*, after running for several seasons in the room in the Egyptian Hall once occupied by the “Mont Blanc” of Albert Smith, paraded for years the provinces. And, truth to tell, both Lemon and Rose were disappointing. The geniality of the editor of *Punch* and the genuine fun of “Arthur Sketchley” were not equal to the weight of Falstaff. After they had been seen the audience wanted more. “Yes,” said the pit, “Mr. Lemon looks first-rate, and so does Mr. Rose; but what next?” And, unfortunately, the answer had to be “a distinctly feeble performance.”

Talking of amateurs, the late Mr. Palgrave Simpson, in years gone by a dramatist of repute (he claimed to have learned his art as a pupil of Scribe), and for a long period the secretary of the Dramatic Authors’ Society, was a most enthusiastic maker-up. But he drew the line at his moustache and imperial. He would occasionally consent to soap them down, but he would never remove them. I remember seeing him once playing Macbeth in these hirsute accessories. He had a slight lisp and spoke English with a touch of the foreign accent, and consequently, when he appeared as the wicked King of Scotland, he seemed to be in training for the Presidentship of the French Republic. He bore a far stronger resemblance to Louis Napoleon than to the Thane of Glamis and Cawdor. Then I remember another remarkable case of making up amongst the amateurs. A non-professional who considered himself slighted accepted the part of the third officer in *The Lady of Lyons* on condition that he might wear what he pleased. His words were simple enough,

"Promotion is rapid in the French Army. I was made a Lieutenant yesterday." He came on to deliver this speech in a long white beard and scanty locks made up as a veteran of ninety!

To return to the professional boards. There were and are some actors who never lose their identity. One, for instance, was the late J. B. Buckstone. He might wear what he pleased, but his voice betrayed him. It is said that the celebrated low comedian was once examined by a Royal Commission on the subject of the censorship of stage plays, and was asked if any proposed performance of his had been prohibited by the Licenser. "Yes," he answered, "I was to have appeared made up as Lord John Russell. But the censor needn't have interfered, for the pit would have known it was Buckstone." Fechter, again, never lost his identity, nor did Charles Mathews. At the Garrick Club there are some scores of pictures of the last in his various impersonations. But although the costumes are different, the face is the same. "Charles the Younger" made up for the *blasé* Coldstream and "The Chorus" in one of Planché's burlesques, but he hated covering his upper lip. He contended that there was more expression to be got out of the mouth than from all the other features gathered together. And this opinion used to prevail at the Bar until Sir Francis Jeune and other popular judges taught counsel that beards and moustaches need not be used exclusively by occupants of the Bench. Keeley, too, had a very distinct individuality. He once appeared in a farce written at a time when the recently passed Liquor Act permitted travellers to purchase beer and spirits under certain restrictions on a Sunday. The husband of the accomplished lady who still heads the list of our *comédiennes* had to play a barman to the barmaid of his wife, and at a given point had to appear in a pair of false whiskers. The other characters on the stage expressed astonishment and accepted the apparition as a burglar. "Nonsense!" shouted a denizen of the gallery, "it's only Keeley!" No, Mr. Keeley and Mr. Buckstone were to remain themselves and no one else to the end of the chapter. Then there was Sothern, whose Lord Dundreary ran for any number of nights at the Haymarket. In this instance the actor never could become dissociated from his original make-up. The remarkable character which played all else off the stage in *Our American Cousin* was the rage of the season. Leech introduced him into *Punch*, and Mr. Burnand set him to work to reply to that remarkable volume called *Essays and Reviews*, which was so nearly a stumbling-block to the present Archbishop of Canterbury. But Edward Askew Sothern had a soul above the dandy in "Piccadilly wheepers," who tripped and lisped and

declared most matters "things that no fellow could understand." Sothern was the pet of society—he hunted and shot and was altogether an agreeable and good-looking personality. So not unnaturally he wished to appear at the Haymarket *au naturel*, without the disguise of wig and other make up. He played in the *Hero of Romance* and *David Garrick*; but, although fairly successful, it was not quite the thing. Every now and again he returned to Lord Dundreary, and the business went up by leaps and bounds. The public were pleased to meet Mr. Sothern, so to speak, in private life as himself in *Home*, or half himself as Brother Sam; but they considered Lord Dundreary business, and flocked into the theatre when the character appeared in the Haymarket bills. As Buckstone was never other than Buckstone, so was Dundreary never other than Dundreary. The first might call himself Lord John Russell and the other desire to be Sothern, but old playgoers knew better, and would have naught else. Both have passed away after being associated in partnership in that little theatre in the Haymarket, which only recently was leased by that past-master in making up, Mr. Beerbohm Tree. And this reminds me that Mr. Tree was one of the English actors who appeared in *L'Aventurière* (the forerunner of *Home*) in the original French. His colleagues were the late Mr. William Herbert ("Polly" Eden) and Miss Geneviève Ward. The performance came off some twenty years ago at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, near the Tottenham-court-road.

"Making up" does much for the actor, but it cannot do all. It helps him to suggest the character, but it can go no further. Unless the soul is in the body, the effort is valueless. To paraphrase Burns, make up "may be the guinea stamp, but a man's a man for all that, and all that."

TWO CLASSICAL REVIVALS.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

TWO announcements, of much interest to lovers of the stage, have recently been made. One is to the effect that Mr. Wilson Barrett will give, at the Lyric Theatre, some representations of Sheridan Knowles's *Virginius*; the other embodies, on the part of Mr. George Alexander, a promise to reproduce, at the St. James's Theatre, *The Way of the World*.

These undertakings, made in the midst of a season practically "up-to-date" in its main features, naturally arrest attention.

They arouse one's memories, and they make one think. Of *The Way of the World*, indeed, most of us have no memories, so far as stage performances of the comedy are concerned. Many of us have read it, in the days when we studied the dramatic literature of the past; but only the greybeards among us can recollect the latest representations of *The Way of the World* in London—representations which date back, apparently, to the winter of 1842. Theatrical records tell us that while the younger Charles Mathews and Mme. Vestris were acting at the Haymarket under the banner of Benjamin Webster, Planché adapted for them this play of Congreve's, turning one of the female characters into a man, and otherwise mitigating the more free-and-easy elements of the piece. He tells us that "the comedy, strongly cast, went off brilliantly." It certainly pleased its first Haymarket audience, and was announced for repetition on some following nights. Mme. Vestris, of course, was Millamant to the Mirabell of H. Hall (which seems to have been only a tolerable impersonation), the Witwould of Mathews, the Sir Wilful of Farren, the Fainall of Vining, the Petulant of Buckstone, the Lady Wishfort of Mrs. Glover, the Mincing of Mrs. Frank Matthews.

History says that *The Way of the World* was not very heartily received at its première in 1700; and that Congreve therefore vowed never to write for the theatre again. As a matter of fact, this was his last play. It was, no doubt, his least popular work, and yet its career during the last century was not undistinguished. Genest takes note of some dozen interesting revivals of it. Verbruggen, the first Mirabell, was followed in the rôle by Wilks, by Ryan, by Milward, by Giffard, by Palmer, by Smith, by Jefferson, by Lewis, by Wroughton, by Holman, and last, but assuredly not least, by Kemble. The roll of Witwoulds includes Bowen, Cibber, Garrick, Woodward, King, Lee Lewes, Lewis, and Banister, jun. The original Fainall—Betterton—was followed by Quin, Mills, Farren, and Beusley; and the original Petulant—Bowman—had for successors Macklin, Yates, Shuter, Baddeley, Woodward, and Suetts. Mrs. Bracegirdle was the first Millamant, and in her train there came successively Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Younger, Katherine Clive, Mrs. Giffard, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Barry, and Miss Farren—a decidedly remarkable array.

Who will be the Millamant of Mr. Alexander's revival? The character needs a very skilful handling. In Hazlitt's view, Millamant is "the perfect model of the accomplished fine lady, the ideal heroine of the comedy of high life." "What," he says, "can be more enchanting than her morning thoughts, her '*Doux sommeils*'?" He admits that she is "nothing but a fine lady;"

nevertheless, he would rather, he declares, have seen Mrs. Abington's Millamant than any Rosalind that ever appeared upon the stage. The recent reprint of Mr. George Meredith's *Essay on Comedy* has reminded readers of his appreciation of Millamant—"a perfect portrait of a coquette"—"an admirable, almost a lovable, heroine." "An air of bewitching whimsicality," says Mr. Meredith, "hovers over the graces of this comic heroine, like the lively conversational play of a beautiful mouth." "She is a flashing portrait"—and so forth.

"The English stage of to-day," I ventured to say lately in a weekly review, "is not too rich in young actresses trained in the traditions of old comedy." But it is possible that Mr. Alexander's choice of Millamant may fall upon an artist who, though not in her first youth, has still sufficient juvenility, as well as a sufficient measure of art and charm, to make a Millamant wholly satisfying and delightful. Mr. Alexander himself has probably done less than justice, so far, to his capacity, by devoting himself so largely to characters of early-middle age. Since Mr. Kyrle Bellew deserted England (practically) for America and the Colonies, we have had no young actor so obviously well fitted as Mr. Alexander is for the impersonation of the heroes of last-century comedy. Those who remember his work in such romantic "costume" parts as De Mauprat, Maurice de Saxe, Nemours, Moray, D'Aubray in *Comedy and Tragedy*, Sir Harry Lovell in *The Gay Lothario*, Molière in Mr. W. Frith's play, and Kit Marlowe in Mr. Courtney's, will not question his ability to shine in such a rôle as that of Mirabell, strongly artificial though it be.

In any case, the revival of *The Way of the World* will stimulate the fast-fading interest in comedy of that sort. During the last few years such pieces have been somewhat at a discount on the London boards. When did we last see in the metropolis a specimen of this *genre*? It was in July last, at the Royalty, where, and when, Mr. Bouchier resuscitated *The Liar*. In the previous month Mr. Forbes Robertson had revived *The School for Scandal* at the Lyceum. In 1895, we had *High Life Below Stairs* at Terry's, and *The Rivals* at the Court; in 1894, *The Country Girl* at Daly's; in 1892, *The Jealous Wife* at the Strand and *The Road to Ruin* at the Opéra Comique; in 1896, *The School for Scandal* and *Wild Oats* at the Criterion. There was a good deal to attract in all these productions; but, in the aggregate, to what did they amount? Are the aforesaid traditions of old comedy to be maintained on a basis comparatively so slight? If we do not take care, there will soon be nobody to transmit these traditions, and in the end, I suppose, old comedy will come to be represented in "century-end" or "century-beginning" fashion.

Will Mr. Wilson Barrett's revival of *Virginus* achieve anything for the vogue of the "poetic" drama? Not necessarily, I fear. The story of *Virginus* and of the daughter whom he preferred to see dead rather than dishonoured has always had a special fascination alike for the playwright and for the playgoer. It has tempted dramatists and theatre-goers in England for rather more than three centuries. A drama on the tale of Appius and Virginia was printed as long ago as 1575. In 1654 came Webster's glowing work on the same subject, afterwards transformed by Betterton into *The Roman Virgin*. Betterton played *Virginus* not only in the latter, but in Dennis's tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*, which belongs to 1709. Next appeared the *Virginia* of Henry Crisp (1754) and the *Appius* of John Moncrieff (1755), in which Mrs. Bellamy was Virginia. A *Virginia* by Frances Brooke (1756) was followed by a *Virginia* of T. Bidlake (1806) and an anonymous *Virginus* of 1820—the year which saw the birth of Knowles's drama. All this tends to prove that it is the legend of *Virginus* and his daughter, rather than the treatment of it, which has made plays on the subject popular and prosperous.

And of all the *Virginus*-and-*Virginia* dramas, Sheridan Knowles's is, of course, the one that wears best. It is, indeed, the only one that has had any acceptance with the English and American public for three-quarters of a century. Since it was first played at Glasgow, with John Cooper in the title-part, Knowles's *Virginus* has wiped out all its predecessors on the same theme. *Virginus* was enacted successively by Macready, by Edmund Kean, and by G. V. Brooke. With mine own eyes have I seen the *Virginus* of William Creswick and of Charles Dillon. I should have liked to see the *Virginia* of Mrs. Hermann Vezin, witnessed at Sadler's Wells just forty years ago. Miss Marriott played the same part at the same theatre in 1864.

Twenty-five years ago there was a revival of the work at the Queen's Theatre, London, with John Ryder as *Virginus*, Miss Henrietta Hodson as *Virginia*, Mr. George Rignold as *Icilius*, and so on. Who does not remember the revival at Drury Lane in 1881, when John McCulloch, in the title part, was supported by Ryder as *Dentatus*, Mr. J. H. Barnes as *Appius*, the late Sir Augustus Harris as *Icilius*, Mrs. Arthur Stirling as *Servia*, and Miss Cowell as *Virginia*? It would seem to be about five years since the play was last performed in the west-end of London, Mr. Edmund Tearle producing it at the Olympic, and assuming the title-character. Both he and his brother, Mr. Osmond Tearle, have done wonders with *Virginus* in the provinces.

On the whole, then, Mr. Barrett's revival of the Knowles play will have no special significance; no suggestion of a return of the public taste for the "poetic." *The Love Chase* when last done in London was voted verbose and dull. *The Hunchback* lives mainly on the scenes between Helen and Modus. The Knowlesian drama is too slow and artificial for this generation; we have no patience with its elaborate affectations. We want either more subtly or more action; the "poetry" is sadly to seek. Nothing would be gained by "cutting freely." The movement would still be slow, the language turgid. *Virginus* is kept alive by the essential pathos of its story, and also by the theatrical effectiveness of its principal figures. *Virginus*, *Appius*, *Icilius*, *Virginia*—these are rôles in which a player can hardly fail if endowed with the necessary personal adaptability in the way of physique and temperament. Mr. Barrett will find it easy to cast *Virginus*—much easier than Mr. Alexander will find that process in the case of *The Way of the World*.

ACTING: THE BASIS OF THE ARTS.

BY EDWARD MORTON.

THAT most ingenious young gentleman, Mr. Max Beerbohm, has lately been inducting us into the mystery of the suction of eggs. In other words, he has made the discovery that "the Actor's medium is himself." Mr. Beerbohm always seems to me to write as if the world only came into existence about twenty-five years ago, and he expatiates, in his superior innocence, upon the old and battered idea that "the Actor's medium is himself," as if he really believed he was contributing something to the wisdom of the ages. Yet the idea is as old as Adam—not of Eden, but of *As You Like It*: it is impossible to particularise in any other way, since both are familiarly known only by one common name. It should be acknowledged that Mr. Beerbohm has developed the idea, which was always a favourite with those who have derided the Actor, in an original manner. It is not difficult to be merely original. A billiard table covered with pink cloth instead of green would be an original idea; but, like Mr. Beerbohm's idea, it would not be more acceptable on that account. Mr. Beerbohm, who assumes that the actor is more sensitive than artists generally, settles the question with the portentous remark that "in criticising the actor you criticise also him." My experience of artists

generally is that they are not less sensitive to criticism than the actor. I might point the remark with a quotation from Horace, or a quotation from the current newspapers. But we will argue the question upon Mr. Beerbohm's hypothesis.

Let it be granted, then, that "the Actor's medium is himself." Is not the same to be said of every artist, whether he expresses himself in pigment, in stone, in sound, or in ink? True, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, and the poet do not present themselves bodily before the world. But the actor's work is no more, and no less, himself, than is theirs themselves. The acrobat exercises his limbs, as the actor exercises his intellect, under the immediate eye of the public; but it is the acrobat's performance, not the acrobat's self, that we admire. Apart from his performance, what charm has the acrobat for his audience? Their admiration is not for the individual who retires from the stage with an elastic step and a beaming countenance. They have done with him by the time he becomes himself again. Their delight is in his performance, not in the man himself, who may be, for all they know or care, an ordinary human being, once away from his work, who cheers the domestic circle with his jests with the chairs and his ready wit with the drawing-room table, just as the poet recites his own verses for the delectation of his admiring friends.

If criticism of acting depended upon the person of the actor and not upon intellectual effort, how should we distinguish between good acting and bad? The actor's self, as in the case of Kean, may be by no means so praiseworthy as his acting; but the audience at a play are not concerned with the character of an actor, but with the actor of a character. A young lady may be a model of beauty and an example of all the virtues, and yet not command attention as an actress. An audience is no respecter of persons. It is not only to the theatre that this remark applies. A politician, who appeals to his audience in as direct a manner as the actor, does not succeed by reason of personal attraction. It is not the politician's self that makes his ideas popular. The politician's self is made popular by his ideas. If the whole matter resolved itself into a simple question of the delivery of speeches anybody could be an orator, or an actor, by getting speeches written for him by an author.

The actor's medium is himself; that is true. But by what process of ratiocination does it follow that criticism of an artist's work is simply criticism of the medium through which it is produced? I might as well attribute my cook's successes, not to the cook's self, but to the pots and pans, which are the medium through which they are produced. In the case of the actor, we are per-

mitted to see the medium, but it cannot even be said that we see the whole mystery of artistic production in operation. The actor's functions have begun long before he appears on the stage, and what we are permitted to see is the finished work. For study and rehearsal bear the same relation to the actor's art as the painter's preliminary sketches to his picture. If we do not distinguish, in the case of the actor's self as a medium, and his own self's self, then to say that an actor plays a villain's part plausibly is to write him down as a villain. The worst kind of actor is he who is like nobody so much as he is like himself. The actor with the gift of imagination can indue his different creations with life and character, as the artist can who works in any other medium. He changes like Proteus, whose self was his medium in the sense in which the actor's self is not. Proteus could literally turn himself into anything he pleased; but the actor works only through the medium of imagination. In other words, the actor is not what he pretends to be, and the best actor in the world could not realise the part of a wild beast or a whirlwind in the style of Proteus.

All art is a question of make-believe. Authors and artists are actors who simply give expression to certain characters and emotions with the pen or the brush, as the actor does by the actual simulation of the feelings which author and painter present through the medium of their own art. Author, painter, and actor, they are only pretending. It is all imitation of one sort or another, and always the result of the exercise of the same faculties of imagination and observation. The actor imagines a character in a play as surely as that character is imagined by the dramatist, and if the actor has not drawn his inspiration directly from his own ideas and his own observation of life, then he is incapable of presenting the character he undertakes. The actor sees a character through his own intelligence, or, as it has sometimes happened, he does not see it at all; for although the dramatist may talk of his ideas, how on earth shall those ideas be expressed in the terms of his own art by an actor who is incapable of feeling and thinking for himself? An English composer might as well undertake to set to music a song printed in the Chinese language, of which he has no knowledge. On the other hand, the composer who interprets sympathetically the words of a poet is only performing the actor's part. Upon his own power of sensibility and his skill in execution, the effect of the work of the musician, the artist, the author, and the actor alike depends. If you criticise the work of any one of them, you criticise also him merely in his capacity as an artist. Robert Louis Stevenson hit upon half the truth only when he said that the actor gives to the work of the

dramatist the commentary of the body. To "the commentary of the body," the actor adds the original conception of his own mind.

The actor sees his scene in his mind's eye, even as the painter and the poet imagine themselves in the scenes they depict in their work; and if the actor's faculty of imitation is limited, so is that, I submit, of any other artist. The actor is himself in his work only to the extent that they are themselves, and the individuality which is expressed through the medium of his own person by an actor is as marked as the style of those who imitate nature in other ways. We hear a great deal of the mannerisms of actors; but have not authors and artists and musicians also mannerisms by which they may easily be recognised? The mannerism is the man. If a dozen actors were put to play one part, they would play it every man according to his own conception. If a dozen painters were set to depict one scene, would not every one differ from the other? The same character, the same situation, would be presented in a different fashion by different authors. No intelligent man could mistake the work of Mr. Rudyard Kipling (say) for that of Mr. Rider Haggard, or the work of Mr. J. M. Barrie for that of Mr. Crockett. *Le style est l'homme même*; and the difference is the difference in the style of acting. In walking through the rooms of the Royal Academy you may see the same subject repeated on the walls by a number of painters. It needs no connoisseur to discover the name of the painter from his work. The same character, the same situation, would be presented by different actors also in a different fashion. Imagine Toole in Irving's parts, and Irving in Toole's. The Nelson of Forbes Robertson and the Nelson of Abington are distinct—or I should say different—conceptions of the same character, defined according to the abilities of the actors, allowance being made for the limitations imposed upon them by the dramatists. If Beerbohm Tree played Arthur Roberts's parts, I am sure he would discover all kinds of unsuspected subtleties in them; he would give us Gentleman Joe, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"; and Arthur Roberts could hardly fail to improve the spirits even of the melancholy Prince of Denmark himself. Art, in its several forms, is but the expression of the artist's own temperament, though the Nature from which all artists copy is always the same. The receptive capacity and the capacity of reproducing impressions are the common gifts of all artists. They are all actors according to the bent in which their faculty is specially directed. It is said that actors do not originate anything. But every actor originates for himself; and a fine actor may be able to get more out of a part than ever an indifferent dramatist put into it. If actors were the mere

machines they are sometimes said to be—machines at most with a will power—if acting implied no sort of creative force, we might all be actors. The present writer, who had lately the temerity to take a humble part in a theatrical performance, given for the purpose of complying with the vexatious terms of the law of copyright, will stake his character as a critic that he is no more fitted to play a part than to write a sonata or to paint a picture. In criticising his own performance as an actor, however, he certainly does not feel that he is making any reflection upon his own self's self, but simply on his acting. An actor should be dissociated from his work to just the same extent as an author ; and to say of Mr. Max Beerbohm that he has written a foolish article is not to treat him with the disdain which the rational man may feel for his immature opinions.

GAMBLING IN THEATRES.

BY MALCOLM WATSON.

ONE of these days it may perhaps occur to some enterprising gentleman to write a full and veracious history of the rise and fall of that strange and anomalous institution, the Theatrical Syndicate. That the time is ripe for such an undertaking cannot, it is true, be said, seeing that although we have witnessed the rise of the many-headed monster, its final and decisive fall is still to come. The thing itself is of a comparatively recent growth. Ten, or at any rate fifteen, years ago it was unknown in its present form. Backers, of course, have always existed ; but in the matter of modesty and a retiring disposition they were, and are, as babes compared to the modern syndicate. Their humble but eminently useful province was to provide a certain sum of money, leaving the favoured manager free to deal with it in the manner deemed by him best calculated to swell the purses of both. The majority of existing actor-managers have started operations in this way with gratifying results to both parties concerned, until the moment arrived when it was found possible by the manager to throw off the yoke of the capitalist without detriment to his business. Mr. Penley, it is no secret, brought a fortune of something like £100,000 both to himself and to the lucky speculator who advanced, or rather guaranteed (for the entire amount was never called up) £1,000 for the production of *Charley's Aunt* and, although in a much smaller degree, *The New Boy* accomplished the same thing for Mr. Weedon Grossmith and his financial partner. In

the excitement of the moment it was forgotten that such occurrences are the exception rather than the rule. Tempted by the alluring prospect of making money without any corresponding effort on their part, individuals, possessing neither the training nor the knowledge required for the business, rushed in, firm in the belief that as a money-maker a west-end London theatre was only inferior to a prosperous South African gold mine.

Set a beggar on horseback, and everybody knows what his ultimate destination will be. In like manner, place an *ignoramus* at the head of a theatre, and there need be little or no hesitation in predicting the result. Once installed in that position, the monied speculator promptly proceeded to regard himself as an expert in all theatrical matters, and as quite equal to the various duties of managerial direction. Thus in process of time came to be evolved the deadly thing called a Theatrical Syndicate, composed of a number of gentlemen who, in the first instance, for some reason best known to themselves, had by the outlay of a few hundred pounds acquired the rights in a play, which, it may confidently be assumed, had previously enjoyed the doubtful honour of being submitted to and unhesitatingly declined by every responsible manager in London. This obtained, their next step was to secure a theatre, no matter at what cost, in order that they might introduce their prize to the notice of the public. With ignorance and inexperience to lead the way, it is hardly surprising that disaster should follow closely in the track, and that in only too many cases complete failure should be the result. Had the mischief ended here one might have been disposed to regard the matter in that chastened spirit of Christian resignation which the undoing of a rash intruder is apt to provoke. But, unfortunately, the evil proved to be of a more far-reaching nature. Competition is, no doubt, an excellent thing. The reckless expenditure of money, however, can certainly not be considered a healthy or a fair kind of competition. It is in this respect that the legitimate dealer in theatrical wares has suffered materially. As it happens, he is debarred from offering his goods in the street or other public places; if he is to dispose of them successfully, he must find a suitable and not too highly priced shop. But in pursuing his inquiries at the present moment he will almost certainly be met with the disconcerting fact that rents have advanced to such a point as to make profitable trading practically impossible in the circumstances, or at best an affair involving the greatest risks. Let me offer a typical example, which, I am desirous it should be understood, is in no way exaggerated. A Syndicate secures the lease of a west-end theatre at £60 a week. Failing to do any good there, they accept

the offer of an established manager to relieve them of it, he paying a premium representing an addition to the original amount of £15 a week. The rent now stands at £75. Shortly afterwards the manager re-lets the place at £100 to the same Syndicate, who have discovered another Syndicate prepared to pay £120. Ultimately this last comes to grief, and, in the hope of recouping itself for a part, at least, of its losses, demands £180 a week from a third Syndicate, whose members are under the immediate obligation of producing a play acquired by them under conditions that admit of no delay. In this manner the rental value of the theatre has increased within a very brief period of time by two hundred per cent! These are no imaginary figures, but are absolutely founded on fact.

It must be obvious, in view of such circumstances, that when the legitimate aspirant to management comes along he will find himself confronted with an exceedingly difficult problem. He cannot afford to enter as a competitor on such ruinous terms, and yet he has a far better title to consideration than his speculative rival. It may not be expressly mentioned in the bond, but, as a matter of fact, the majority of syndicates are formed for the purpose of indulging "in a little gamble." They are thus prepared to give long odds to fortune, confident that, if by some happy fluke the thing *does* come off, they will reap a substantial benefit. If, on the other hand, as is too often the case, misfortune ensues, they have at least "had their flutter," and off they go buoyed up by the hope that better luck will attend them next time. From the artistic standpoint the system is indefensible and subversive of all good; but art is in reality the last thing with which these gentlemen are inclined to concern themselves. Actors also suffer appreciably. A Syndicate is a creature so nebulous in its constitution, and so elusive in its movements, that to obtain a firm hold upon it is next to impossible. A breath of disaster will suffice to disperse its intangible particles, and when particularly it tacks the word "limited" to its tail you will move heaven and earth in a vain endeavour to obtain redress or even justice from it. For those who can draw any comfort from the idea, there remains, of course, the consolatory thought that things must right themselves in course of time. But the process is lamentably slow, and I, for one, cannot blind myself to the fact that during its evolution much harm is being effected. A theatre, experience tends to show, can only be conducted on a sound and sure basis when the reins of government rest in the hands of one individual, and that a duly qualified and properly trained person. One has only to glance at the existing London managements to be assured

of the fact. Gradually, doubtless, the weeds at present over-running parts of the theatrical garden will be rooted out, and we shall see a reversion to the earlier and only true system; but, meantime, few will deny that their pestiferous presence in it is a subject for unqualified regret and one provocative not infrequently of lasting scandal.

A TIME-LIMIT FOR PLAYS.

BY HENRY ELLIOTT.

I SHOULD like to see it made penal for a theatrical management to start a play (constituting a full night's entertainment) before eight o'clock, or to finish it after eleven. I have been excited to the expression of this desire by certain recent experiences of "first-nights." At one of these the piece began at a quarter to eight and had not concluded till a quarter to twelve. At two others the curtain rose at a quarter-past eight and did not fall until just before midnight. These latter certainly were aggravated by the fact that the first of the two acts into which each play was divided occupied nearly two hours in performance. Now, I venture to call for a reform in things of this sort, in the interests alike of playgoers, play-producers, and play-makers.

Managements cannot be made too soon to realise that the public does not want to come to the theatre till quite eight o'clock. Obviously the late diner does not desire to arrive till even later; for him nine o'clock is much the more convenient hour. Nine o'clock is the very earliest time at which (without derangement of his habits) he can, even by hurrying, reach the play-house; and those entrepreneurs who start at nine o'clock the evening's *pièce de résistance* are, I am convinced, admirably wise. It is so easy to precede it by a little one-act play which shall occupy the attention of the pit and gallery till nine o'clock is sounded. Assuredly no entertainment should begin until eight o'clock at the earliest, for even the bourgeois and the plebeian classes among playgoers have to get home from their work and take their evening meal before they set out for the theatre, and, as few working people cease their labours till five or even six o'clock, there is clearly little leisure in which to get ready for the theatre by eight p.m.

Once in his place, wherever that may be, the playgoer emphatically does not wish to be glued to it, without an interval, for the best part of two hours. It is a mystery to me how experienced "showmen" can open a night's diversion in that wholesale fashion. The bad habit was begun (I am inclined to think) at the Savoy, where Gilbert and Sullivan and Carte were wont to give us a long

first act and a shorter second. This example has been followed by their imitators, and overdone in the process. The first act of your modern musical comedy, nowadays, is always portentously prolonged.

Still, even that can be forgiven if the curtain falls finally at a reasonable hour. In this regard, the managements should think more than they do of the great bulk of their patrons—the occupants of gallery, upper circle, and pit. These are the people who have to get home by tram and 'bus or train. To the "first-class earls who keep their carriage" the point in question is a matter of indifference; but, then, "first-class earls," though lavish patrons of the theatre, are not so very numerous, and certainly cannot maintain the stage on their own unaided shoulders. The respectable middle-class enthusiast has his uses, and should be sympathetically considered. Besides, the difficulty is not only one of locomotion homeward; there is the ingredient of boredom. A piece must be exceptionally good or attractive if it is to keep the public interest alive and undiminished for more than three consecutive hours.

A varied "bill," whether of two or three pieces, may maintain the said interest unwearied and unimpaired; but if a programme consists of one play only, and if that play takes more than three hours to represent, it is necessary that it should have extraordinary magnetic qualities. For my own part, I do not know any play, outside of the Great Masters, from Shakspeare to Ibsen, which is worth the devotion to it of more than three hours of our time. A long play is physically and mentally tiring, however excellent it may be. Indeed, the more it impresses or diverts you, the greater tax it makes upon your mental and physical tissues.

It will be seen that I write in the interests quite as much of the managements as of the public. Entrepreneurs, I fancy, can hardly be aware of the extent to which they run the risk of failure by promoting or permitting such long and tedious premières. How can an audience, however friendly, be otherwise than irritated when it finds the time stepping slowly but surely away, and the chance of catching the last tram, 'bus, or train becoming more and more remote? People want to get home at a decent hour for supper and bed, and yet they do not want to miss any necessary question of the play; how can they help being annoyed when they discover that some of the "plums" of the performance have not been arrived at till eleven o'clock has come and gone? They get impatient; their impatience is felt and recognised by the actors; and the fate of the piece trembles in the balance. Is it not extremely foolish to handicap a production in this manner? It is no part of my duty to take

up the cudgels for the newspaper men who attend the first nights as a matter of business, and should be (and no doubt are) content to take the rough with the smooth. But managements ought to be aware that the longer a play is, the shorter (in most cases) will be the "notices" next day, for it is only the very biggest news-sheets which can find room for lengthy criticisms after midnight has sounded. And the "great B.P." is apt to be affected (quite absurdly, of course) by the length or shortness of a criticism. What a newspaper dismisses curtly seems to the average man to be necessarily not of much account.

It will be seen from this that it is to the interest not only of the playgoer and the manager, but of the author also, that a play shall not exceed, in length of performance, a certain time-limit. It is very much to the advantage of a playwright that his work shall be treated by the critics not only with some fulness, but also with the care which is possible only when time allows. Many a worthy piece has been "polished off" briefly and hurriedly in the morning Press, simply because the representation had concluded at too late an hour. If I were a dramatic author, I should insist upon a first representation being over by 11.15 at the latest, and if by 11 p.m., why all the better. The thing can easily be done; all that is necessary is that the play shall be adequately rehearsed, and shall not be submitted to the public and the Press until, by "cutting" or by closer playing, it is brought within the bounds I have suggested. Begin at 8, and stop at 11: that would be my advice, based on a playgoing experience of many years, to all concerned. Especially would I commend it to the attention of the dramatists, who are exhibiting a growing tendency to prolixity. Playwrights should not proceed on the assumption that "time is no object;" it is an object, and an object as much to the dramatist as to the playgoer. If the former has a story to tell, let him tell it simply and concisely; if he proposes to rely mainly on dialogue, let him take care that it is not out of proportion to the action. The attention of the auditor must be seized at the outset and held throughout; if it begins to wander, we may be sure that there is something wrong.

THE DEARTH OF DRAMATISTS.

II.

BY A LOOKER-ON.

WHEN, in an article upon this subject, in the April *Theatre*, I spoke of devoting a further paper to the consideration of "ways and means," I was far from intending to suggest, as

some of my friendly critics seem to have imagined, that, like General Trochu, I "had a plan" of my own that should initiate the reforms advocated. If I were so provided, I should readily produce my scheme; but, unfortunately, I can lay claim to no special insight, to no clearer recognition of what ought to be done than is possessed by many a writer on the subject. No; "I come but in as others do," to throw out, if it may be, a suggestion or two, to add my voice to the clamour which is rising for some better means than exist at present of encouraging the "dramatic supply." What seems to be desirable is that any schemes lately put before the public should be discussed with the view of discovering whether there is in them any seed of success and permanence. All who are agreed that the number of interesting plays produced is far too small, and that too little encouragement is given to men of letters to turn their attention to the drama, will be ready to discuss sympathetically and with respect any honest endeavour to bring about changes in this respect. The mass of the public will never be brought to care much whether we have a modern dramatic literature or not (though it is quite certain that whenever a genuinely interesting and fine play is produced they will not pass it by): but there is a public, and a large public too, which does care, and which would make it well worth the while of any enterprising and intelligent manager who should make it his business to consider their tastes.

The efforts made in the past to stimulate the production of original plays have been extremely feeble, and have had poor results. The Independent Theatre is practically the only working organisation that has professed such an aim, and the number of original English pieces which it gave were in about the same proportion to its foreign productions as was Jack Falstaff's halfpenny worth of bread to his "intolerable deal of sack." The Dramatic Students' Society contented itself with the revival of old plays, a very worthy object, certainly, and one which ought to have ensured it a longer life than it enjoyed. The British Society of Dramatic Art declared a part of its mission to be the affording to young and deserving authors a chance of getting their feet upon the ladder, but it went the wrong way to work, and came to an untimely end. More hopeful than any of these associations is the New Century Theatre which has just come into existence. Founded by Miss Robins, a remarkably clever actress, whose career has so far been stunted and checked by her inordinate admiration for Ibsen and his works, with the co-operation of such men as Mr. Archer, Sir Frederick Pollock, and Mr. Frampton, A.R.A., its sole endeavour is to be the furtherance of the cause of Dramatic Art. It proposes, by

producing "plays of intrinsic interest which find no place on the stage in the ordinary way of theatrical business," to "pave the way for the permanent institution, artistically administered, which is essential to the development of the drama and acting." Furthermore, "they would have it clearly understood that they do not go in search of the esoteric, the eccentric, or the mystic; that they are devoted to no special school or tendency; that their productions will not be exclusively 'literary,' in the narrow sense of the word, and still less 'educational' or instructive; that they do not propose, in a word, to present the Undramatic Drama in any of its disguises. They will welcome all *acting plays*, of a certain standard of intrinsic merit, which are likely to interest the intelligent public to whom they appeal." They recognise cordially both the artistic spirit and the difficulties of many of the leading managers. Prevailing conditions, they see, make the production of new pieces a very costly business, and "leave no borderland between sensational success and disastrous failure" (which is exactly what I pointed out last month, and what, of course, everyone of ordinary intelligence can see); and they hope to raise the standard of merit in plays, while lowering the standard of receipts required to constitute an honourable success.

Now, these are worthy aims. Unfortunately, when we look more closely into the matter we find—what? That the enterprise was initiated by performances of *Little Eyolf*, a Norwegian play, and, in my own private opinion, a play, unlike many of Ibsen's, of no intrinsic interest whatever; and of *Mariana*, a Spanish play. That its next production is to be *John Gabriel Borkman*, an even feebler and more disappointing piece of work, judged from a dramatic standpoint, than *Little Eyolf*. That of the two other pieces mentioned as in contemplation one is *Peer Eyut*, a poem containing fine passages, but hardly, so far as I recall it, a drama of sufficiently intrinsic merit to interest more than a small circle. Now, if this is the way in which the New Century Theatre is to be run, we cannot expect much from it. It will soon be regarded merely as another Independent theatre, and cease to attract attention. However, we will hope for the best. No doubt original plays will soon begin to be offered to Miss Robins and her colleagues, and in due time we may see some of them produced. Only the directors of the enterprise must be warned against the mistaken notion that a play, because it is a good play, can find no place on the ordinary stage. This is quite a delusion. Excellent pieces are seen every now and then under present conditions. What we want is more of them. Managers are just as ready to produce good plays as bad ones, if

they see that a sufficient number of people prefer the former. But they suffer from the wrong-headed idea that the "theatrical public" is like a British parliamentary majority, all ready to vote the same way. Rather does it resemble the "group system" which obtains in Continental politics. It is composed of many sections, and each section has its own particular preferences and dislikes. Occasionally they all unite, and become unanimous in favour of some specially attractive performance; but, as a rule, the members of each group pursue their own path, and pick and choose for themselves amongst the entertainments offered. What the group of those who are dissatisfied with present conditions have to do is to persuade one or two managers that its numbers are large enough to support a more enlightened policy than prevails, and to show that it would be sufficiently to their advantage to encourage, rather than to discourage, native dramatic talent.

So much for the New Century Theatre, which, I am sure, has the best wishes of *The Theatre*. So much, too, for the action required on the part of the enlightened playgoing public. Now, let us consider what managers can do if they are inclined to assist. One of the weekly organs of the theatrical profession makes the following suggestions: First of all, managers should have a printed set of rules, to be observed by all who wish to submit plays for their consideration. Next, the pieces sent in must be read within a stated time. Those rejected altogether should be returned without delay. Those in which there are good ideas, but which are unsuitable for production in the shape their authors have given them, might be handed over to an experienced playwright, so that he and the authors could collaborate. Those that seem worth a trial could be first "run through" before a few experts, then subjected to the ordeal by *matinée*, and would finally, if they came through it with success, make their way into an evening bill.

This is an admirable scheme, if only it can be put into operation. The great thing is that plays submitted shall be read. It is bad enough for the unlucky author to get back his MS., like the poet in one of Hogarth's cartoons, with the *ultimatum* of the manager, "I have read your play and it will not do." But it is much worse if it returns to him, as does poor Triplet's tragedy in *Masks and Faces*, bearing evident signs of never even having been opened. Then, of course, those who read them must be prepared to take a small risk in producing pieces they approve of, even if their authors are unknown. At present, both timidity and lack of judgment incline all, or nearly all, managers to take anything they can get from a playwright with a name rather than

produce even a good piece by one with reputation yet to make. Some people may cavil at the charge of "lack of judgment," but it is only necessary to think of the plays, afterwards successful, which various managers have refused, to see how little their opinion is worth. One of the best-known and most popular of our actor-managers refused nearly every play that has made a hit during the last eight or ten years. In one case, he would have nothing to do with a piece because he did not like the author's handwriting; in another, he declined a comedy that drew all London because the author pilfered his cigarettes! Fortunately, this sort of foolishness is not commonly met with; but it shows how little businesslike theatrical management sometimes is, and what sort of difficulties dramatists (even those who do *not* pilfer cigarettes) have to contend with. The new authors will, of course, be paid at a much smaller rate than the well-known ones, but they are not likely to grumble if they can make as much out of a play as they do out of an averagely successful novel.

One more thing managers might do, and that is pay some attention to "curtain-raisers." In writing for the stage, more perhaps than in any other kind of composition, it is necessary that an author should try his hand first on small works before he attempts large ones. But so little encouragement is given to the productions of one-act plays that nowadays the author finds it of little or no use to write them. "Anything's good enough for the pit and gallery" seems to be the prevailing idea, and the consequence is that to go at eight to a theatre, where the principal piece does not begin until nine, is to subject oneself to a torture only comparable to Sydney Smith's "being preached to death by wild curates." For this state of things the dramatic critics are largely responsible. Apparently, they act upon the same principle as do the reporters at public banquets, when they omit all the speeches made on the earlier and merely formal toasts and confine themselves to giving "the speech of the evening." In the case of a good many of them this excites no surprise, but surely those who deserve the name of "critic" might take enough interest in the drama to devote, at any rate, a line or two to new front-pieces. Very seldom do we find a curtain-raiser mentioned at all, and then only if it happens to be by a known writer, or to have begun so late that the Press were compelled to see it against their will. This, unfortunately, is not the only grievance that can be laid on the doorsteps of the general body of critics of the drama. Quick to condemn or ridicule the new-comer (by the way, it must not be supposed that

I, *moi qui parle*, am a disappointed author; I have never had a play produced and never offered one for consideration, save a youthful effort or two in years past), slow to speak the unpleasant truth to popular idols who overstep the modesty of nature or follow unworthy ends, they cannot be counted on for any material aid in bringing about a new order of things. "There never was a time," said Mr. Stanley Jones recently in *To-morrow* (and Mr. Stanley Jones has spoken a good deal of truth, even if he has overstepped the mark at times)—"there never was a time when so many good intellects were engaged in writing about the theatre," and he is no doubt right. What a humiliating thought, then, that they should exert so little influence, that they should either not take the trouble or be powerless to direct or modify the popular taste, and to assist the struggling writer for the stage by words of counsel, encouragement, or well-timed rebuke.

What we suffer from is this everlasting cringing to "the public" on the part of everybody. Why, any author, any manager, any critic who has anything in him ought to make the public go his way, not be perpetually endeavouring to follow its uncertain and wandering steps. You meet some west-end theatre owner and say to him, "My dear fellow, that piece of Mr. X's which you gave last was quite good, but why on earth have you followed it up by this forcible-feeble, slipshod, pinchbeck attempt at romance?" And he will tell you, with a deprecating air, that he quite agrees with your estimate of the two entertainments, but that as the public wanted romance he felt bound to give it to them. There are only two theatres in London that have any character of their own. One is the Lyceum; the other the Gaiety. All the rest are swayed about by this and that turn of fashion; will be giving one month a capital drama or an amusing farce and the next a hotch-potch of inferior music-hall performances, strung together on a thread of imbecile dialogue and eked out by an incident or two borrowed from thirty-year old provincial pantomimes; have no settled plan of campaign, no idea save that they must follow the craze of the moment.

What a strong man does is to take his own line and lead opinions instead of scrambling along behind it with a feverish eagerness to know which way it is going next. There are plenty of managers whose taste is in the direction of silliness, spectacle, and theatricality, undiluted with wit or observation. But there are several who know better, and if they would only have the courage of their convictions, there is little doubt that the public they so much fear would soon fall into line, and they would have

the satisfaction, not only of making as much money as before, but of obeying their artistic conscience and of aiding the British theatre to cast off the shackles which have bound it so long.

THE DRAMATIC SUPPLY: A RECOLLECTION OF SOTHERN.

BY T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

NOW that the complaints of the "unacted" are once more in evidence, some early experiences of mine may prove amusing, if not instructive. I have often wondered why from the days of my early boyhood I was bent on writing plays, but reading one of William Black's charming novels I came across the reason. Of one of his delightfully drawn characters he says:—"Like everyone else, he wanted something that he had not got—and he 'stupidly chose' *a difficult thing*." There was my case in a nutshell! In those far off years, Sothorn, then at the zenith of his Dundreary and Garrick fame, was my father's most intimate friend, a constant visitor at his house, and the hero of my heart. I resolved to submit my first comedietta to him, but hearing him one day petulantly declare that every man he met had "either written a play or wanted to sell one," I held my hand and posted my piece to the Kendals (strangers to me at that time), who had just severed their connection with the old Haymarket company. To my intense delight they not only accepted it, but successfully produced it; and Sothorn, with some show of vexation, asked me why I had not told him anything of my aspirations. I answered by handing him a farce, which he at once "put up" at the Haymarket, and which, as it was kept in the bill during a lamentable succession of substantial failures, came to be ironically called "The Success of the Season." Sothorn then strongly advised me not to fritter away my time on one-act plays, but to set to work on a three-act comedy. This I did, and when it was finished I sent it to him. "Extraordinary, absolutely extraordinary," he wired in reply. "Come and talk it over with me." That I hastened to do this goes without saying, and when Sothorn affectionately placed his hand on my shoulder and said:—"I have thoroughly enjoyed reading your play, dear boy. It is original, absolutely original; let us talk it over act by act." I was the happiest young fellow in the world. "Well," he went on in the most encouraging manner, "tell me candidly are you

quite satisfied with the first act?" I urged that the first act was simply an introduction to what was to follow, but admitted that it might be improved. "Very well," he said, "being happily at one on that point, we'll go on to the second act. As *you* suggest, the first act can be easily overhauled and put right—but the second act's not good, now *is* it?" "Isn't it?" I gasped, for I was very proud of that second act. "No, you know it isn't," said Sothern, "and you know it better than I do, for you're a dramatist and I'm only an actor. Very well. And now for the third act." "Oh, the third act's strong!" I cried. "Strong!" he answered, "it's more than strong—it's *bestly*!" And then, with that irresistible twinkle in his matchless grey-blue eyes that told me that I had been the victim of one of his countless "sells," he handed me back the manuscript. I was crestfallen enough at the time, but I glanced through the piece again the other day, realised what a poor thing it was, and how good it was of that busy actor to bore himself by reading it. And so we fell back on the farces; and in England and America. Sothern produced several from my pen.

It is in connection with one of them that I have an as yet untold tale to tell. It was called *My Wife's Father's Sister*. Sothern himself gave it its title, rejoicing in what he called "the wildness" of it, and the piece was first performed at the Theatre-Royal, Brighton. Sothern, who, with his usual good nature, had undertaken all the responsibility of the rehearsals, was very anxious that I should be present on the Monday of its production, but I was unable to join him until the Tuesday. When I entered his sitting-room at the Grand Hotel, his face fell. "My dear fellow," he said, "what on earth brings you here?" "Why, to see my piece, of course," I replied. "Then you did not get my telegram last night?" he asked. "Certainly not, where did you send it?" "Why, to Birmingham, of course." "Ah! then that accounts for it. I was in London last night. What did you telegraph about?" "Why, strongly advising you not to come; but since you *are* here, we'll say no more about it—indeed, I'm sorry I mentioned it. How are things in Birmingham?" Of course by this time my curiosity with regard to this telegram was highly excited, but though I pressed him closely on the subject, Sothern would not again speak about it, always, when I referred to it, changing the topic of conversation. Still less would he discuss the first-night performance of my little play, concerning which I was all eagerness to hear. At last, after about an hour of this fencing, he said, in the kindest way, "Well, my dear boy, I may as well tell you the truth, for bitter as it is, if you are to be a playwright, it may not be a useless

lesson. The reason I telegraphed to you not to come was because *My Wife's Father's Sister* was simply the most outrageous failure that was ever hissed off a stage, and I wanted to spare you the pain of knowing it." "But," I protested, "there are some very nice notices of it in the newspapers." "Just so," said Sothern, "I strained every nerve, and used every effort on your behalf; and my Press friends were very good to me. It was impossible to get anything else ready until to-morrow night, and to-night we play the poor little piece for the second and the last time. There! That was why I told you not to come." Distressed and mortified though I was, I could not but thank him for his consideration, and I then suggested that I had better go back by the next train. "No," he said, "don't do that. As you are here, come and sit it through like a man, and at supper we'll try to find out how we came to be so much mistaken, for, as you know, I felt certain that the piece would succeed." Never shall I forget his kindness to me that afternoon. He seemed so genuinely sorry for my disappointment, so anxious to make what I had fondly hoped would be a pleasant little holiday go gaily by, so distressed to notice that I could do no justice to the appetising dinner that he had provided for me, so sympathetic when the time for approaching the now much-dreaded theatre arrived. On my way there (Sothern drove and I walked) I chanced to meet a mutual friend. "Hullo!" said he, "how did the new farce go last night? I was so sorry not to be there." Without reservation I gave him Sothern's report. "Well," he said, "I believe it was all Sothern's fault. He was in a pronounced practical-joking mood last night, and one of the actors this morning told me that he told them that *you* were in the house, that you are a most exacting and irritable man, and that you were intensely annoyed at the grossly vulgar way in which *My Wife's Father's Sister* was interpreted. One by one the actors and actresses as they came off the stage had from his lips their dose of what they supposed, and still suppose, to be *your* bitter criticism: 'Abominable!' 'Atrocious!' and 'Actionable!' were among the mildest of expressions that you were reported to have used, and the poor people became so nervous that they hardly knew what they were doing. At the end of the performance Sothern told them collectively that you had left the theatre a shattered and prematurely old man." Now, of course, I saw why Sothern, always oddly full of remorse for the results of his irrepressible practical jokes, had sent me the telegram urging me not to come to Brighton and had treated me with so much solicitude, and when I entered the theatre in which I expected to witness the complete failure of a

number of nerveless performers to galvanise a dead play into life, I was possibly as indignant with him as any one. (Bless his memory! no one could be so long.) It was pre-arranged that I was not to go round to his dressing room during the evening, but to meet him at the hotel after the performance. To my astonishment, the comedietta went capitally, and seeing that it was being well received by a crowded and amused audience, I ventured to watch its progress. The curtain fell to loud applause, and until I sat at *tête-à-tête* supper with Sothern, I was lost in amazement. But then once more came the "blue-grey" twinkle in his speaking eyes, and they told me the whole story. "Oh Ned!" I said, "the piece went as well *last* night as it did *to-night*!" "Better," he replied calmly, "only I couldn't resist the 'sell.' Now light a cigar and let us be happy." No one in Sothern's society could help being happy, and I was abundantly so until the small hours of the morning, when he said, "By the way, I wonder how your supper party is getting on?" "*My supper party*," I exclaimed; "what on earth do you mean?" "Why," he said, "I really ought to have mentioned it before; but I took the liberty of telling the performers in *My Wife's Father's Sister* that you were so delighted with their improvement in the interpretation of the piece on its second night that you wished to welcome them at a little supper you had ordered at the Old Ship. I happened to be late in the theatre to-night, and know that, loud in your praise, and full of pleasant anticipations, they all went off to meet you there. I have no doubt you took care to provide a good supper." And I heard the next day that they went, and waited, and (no longer praising me) withdrew. I wonder why it was that, do what he would, no one could long be angry with dear dead-and-gone Sothern? It may have been because all those who really knew him well loved him well.

JULIUS CÆSAR ON THE STAGE.

BY ARTHUR ESCOTT.

IT argues some temerity on the part of Mr. Tree that he should have decided to revive Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*. Curiously enough, this tragedy, notwithstanding its exceptional strength as an illustration of Roman history at a turning point, its fine delineation of several important characters, and its incidental adaptability to the purposes of theatrical effect, is comparatively unknown to the public here through the medium of the stage. Mr. Tree, however, may have found encouragement in the fact,

among others, that at the outset it attracted no little attention, critical as audiences in those days seem to have been. According to the latest researches and comparisons, it appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, though the older commentators, including Malone, assigned it to 1607. Four lines in John Weaver's *Mirror of Martyrs* (1601)—

The many-headed multitude were drawne
By Brutus' speech that Cæsar was ambitious ;
When eloquent Mark Antonie had showne
His virtues ; who but Brutus then was vicious ?—

may be taken as conclusive upon the point, since they were prompted by Shakspeare and not by Plutarch. Several plays upon the subject had already been written, such as *Julius Cæsar*, 1562; *Cæsar and Pompey*, mentioned by Gosson in his *School of Abuse*, in 1579; and *Epilogus Cæsaris Interfecti*, by Dr. Richard Eades, acted at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1583. Each of these, we may assume, was eclipsed by Shakspeare's *Cæsar*; at any rate, they have passed into oblivion to all but literary antiquaries. Probably, as many suggest, it was aided by an indirect reference to the rebellion of the Earl of Essex. "I would note," writes Mr. Furnivall, "how closely Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar* would come home to the ears and hearts of a London audience of 1601, after the favourite's outbreak against his Sovereign. 'Et tu, Brute!'—this exclamation, not in Plutarch, but to be found in Eades's play—"would mean more to them than to us. Indeed, it is possible that the conspiracy against Elizabeth may have made Shakspeare choose 1601 as the time for producing, if not writing, his great tragedy, with its fruitful lesson of conspirators' ends." However that may be, it could not have suffered by comparison with a slightly later *Julius Cæsar*, written by the William Alexander who was to become Lord Stirling. In 1613, we find Lord Treasurer Stanhope paid John Hemminge "for presenting before the Princes Highness, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Pallatyne Elector fourteene several plays, of which Cæsar's tragedy was one."

Apparently forgotten for half a century, this tragedy, altered by Dryden and Davenant, was revived at Drury Lane in 1665, with Bell as the Dictator, Mohun as Cassius, Hart as Brutus, Kynaston as Mark Antony, and Mrs. Marshall as Calphurnia. The same cast was employed in it seventeen years afterwards at the Theatre Royal. Before long, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, Betterton added Brutus to his list. One great excellence in this great actor, Colley Cibber tells us, "was that he could vary his spirit to the different characters he acted. Those wild, impatient starts, that fierce and flashing fire, which he threw into Hotspur, never came

from the unruffled temper of his Brutus (for I have more than once seen a Brutus as warm as Hotspur). When the Betterton Brutus was provoked in his dispute with Cassius, his spirit flew only to his eye; his steady look alone supplied that terror when he disdained an intemperance in his voice should rise to. Then, with a settled dignity of contempt, like an unheeding rock, he repelled upon himself the foam of Cassius. Perhaps the very words of Shakspeare will better let you into my meaning:—

Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frighted when a madman stares?

And a little after:—

There is no terror, Cassius, in your looks, &c.

Not but in some part of this scene, where he reproaches Cassius, his temper is not under this suppression, but opens into that warmth which becomes a man of virtue; yet this is that parting spark of anger which Brutus himself endeavours to excuse." It is a little surprising, if we look to Betterton's career as a whole, that the text should not have been tampered with to any material extent. Perhaps the best Cassius he found was Verbruggen. Crabbed old Anthony Aston has something to say of the acting here. In the great scene between the two, he says, "you might behold the great contest, viz.: whether Nature or Art excelled; Verbruggen, wild and untaught, or Betterton in the trammels of instruction." Barton Booth succeeded the latter as Brutus, as might have been expected of the representative of Cato in Addison's lucky tragedy; and Quin, with his severe and statuesque style, acquired some prominence as Mark Antony.

Mangled here and there, *Julius Cæsar*, apart from a few unimportant performances, was on the shelf until 1812, when John Philip Kemble, anxious to distinguish himself as Brutus, revived it at Covent Garden. Charles Kemble was the Mark Antony, Egerton the Julius Cæsar, Charles Young the Cassius. As usual, the manager altered the verse still further, and insisted upon pronouncing Rome as "Room." Edmund Kean did not care for the play, though fond of *Coriolanus*. Macready distinguished himself at the outset of his career by his Cassius—"a part," he says, "in the representation of which I have through my professional life taken peculiar pleasure as one among Shakspeare's most perfect specimens of idiosyncrasy"—and in the fulness of fame by his Brutus. "It is one of those characters," he wrote in 1836, "that requires peculiar care, which only repetition can give; but it can never be a part that can inspire a person with an eager desire to go to a theatre to see

represented. I am pleased to hear that every paper noticed the senate scene." Just before his retirement, 1851, the great tragedian, always ready to acknowledge his shortcomings, jotted in his diary—"Acted Brutus as I never—no, never, acted it before in regard to dignified familiarity of dialogue or enthusiastic inspiration of lofty purpose. The tenderness, the reluctance to deeds of violence, the instinctive abhorrence of tyranny, the open simplicity of heart and natural grandeur of soul, I never so perfectly, so conscientiously portrayed before. I think the audience felt it." Mark Antony, by the way, had been one of his earliest essays. Meanwhile, at Sadler's Wells, Phelps had carefully revived the piece, with which he closed his second season there. Charles Kean passed it over, greatly as it must have appealed to his sense of the picturesque. And now we may go at once, as far as important stage history is concerned, to the season of 1881, when Sir Augustus Harris, acting upon a suggestion made in *The Theatre* two years previously, brought over the Meiningen company to appear in *Julius Cæsar* at Drury Lane.

Of course, the fate of Cæsar has not infrequently been utilised abroad for dramatic purposes, especially in France during what is called the classical period. Robert Garnier's *Marc Antoine* was the earliest instance in point. Voltaire's *Mort de Césaire*, produced at the Théâtre Français in 1743, should also be mentioned. "Frankly enough," writes Mr. Frederick Hawkins in his *French Stage in the Eighteenth Century*, "he avowed from the outset that in substance the piece was an adaptation of *Julius Cæsar*, with a direct imitation of Mark Antony's speech over the body of the Dictator. He once thought of translating the English tragedy, but soon laid it aside in despair. It was an 'ouvrage monstrueux,' as Shakspeare, 'that grand génie,' lived in 'a barbarous age.'" Here, not for the first or the last time, the appreciative critic was at war with the stickler for the conventions of the French drama. "I doubt," Mr. Hawkins continues, "whether the *Mort de Césaire* was anything but an academical exercise. For the poet, instead of 'disfiguring' it with a love intrigue, dispensed with female personages altogether, and, less anxious to produce a piece of the orthodox dimensions than to comply strictly with the requirements of his subject, disregarded the Horatian precept so far as to limit himself to three acts. Indeed, the tragedy seems to have been intended for the colleges of Paris, in which it was repeatedly played. 'The author of the tender *Zaire*,' writes Algarotti, 'preaches nothing but sentiments of ambition, liberty, and revenge.' How great is the contrast between Cæsar and Brutus, here made father and son! Infinite

art is needed to describe, on the one hand Brutus, with a virtue strange, ferocious, and even bordering on ingratitude, but engaged in a righteous cause, and on the other hand Cæsar, with his admirable qualities of head and heart, but endeavouring to destroy the liberties of his country. In both these characters we are strongly interested throughout. As for the three-act form, nobody thinks the *Venus di Medici* less perfect than the *Gladiator* because it is two feet shorter." And the piece was fairly successful, "in spite of its novel form, the absence of female interest, and the improbability arising from the representation of the conspiracy against Cæsar under the conditions imposed by the unities of place and time."

Queen Sleep.

I RULE the land where fairies dwell,
And shape the sweetest dreams ;
I flit o'er hill and wood and dell
And skim the deepest streams :
I nurse the sick upon my breast,
And ease their bitter pain ;
I lull the troubled to their rest,
And make them glad again.

When twilight falls on the dew-bent flowers,
And fireflies shine through the twinkling showers,
I come on the moon's pale beams.

Buds, babies, lambs, and elfin lives
I make my fondest care ;
Bright bumble bees within their hives,
And butterflies so fair :
But all that lives I love and kiss,
And soothe with my caress ;
And ev'ry one my touch would miss,
If I came not to bless.

When martins seek their nest 'neath the eaves,
And rushes nod to the whispering leaves,
I float on the scented air.

ALFRED C. CALMOUR.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

SO far as novelties are concerned, the theatrical season may be considered to have reached its climax during the past month, which included not only the production of new plays by Mr. Pinero and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones and the first performance at the Lyceum of the English version of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, but also the opening of Mr. Beerbohm Tree's new theatre, Her Majesty's; the last event taking place, unfortunately, too late to allow of detailed record in this number. The appearance of Madame Sarah Bernhardt at the Adelphi, and that of Madame Réjane at the Lyric, are, the unexpected always excepted, the only occurrences of really prime importance which may be looked for in the immediate future.

MADAME SANS-GÈNE.

A Comedy, in a Prologue and Three Acts, by VICTORIEN SARDOU and EMILE MOREAU. Adapted by J. COMYNS CARR. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, April 10.

Napoleon	HENRY IRVING	Caroline, Queen of Naples,	Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON.
Lefebvre	MR. FRANK COOPER	Elisa, Princess of Piombino	Miss JULIA ARTHUR
Fouché	MR. MACKINTOSH	Madame de Rovigo ..	Miss MARY RORKE
Comte de Neipperg ..	MR. BEN WEBSTER	La Roussotte	Miss MAUD MILTON
Savary, Duc de Rovigo ..	MR. F. H. MACKLIN	Julie	Miss BRENDA GIBSON
Despréaux	MR. NORMAN FORBES	Toinon	Miss EDITH CRAIG
Saint-Marsan	MR. H. COOPER CLIFFE	Catherine (Madame Sans-Gêne)	Miss ELLEN TERRY
Roustan	MR. TYARS		
Vabontrain	MR. S. JOHNSON		

The task undertaken by Mr. Comyns Carr to produce a satisfactory version of an essentially French play was by no means an easy one. He had two courses before him—one to recreate as far as possible the exact tone of the original, the other to suggest the *bourgeois dame des halles* by means of distinctively English slang. Rightly or wrongly, he elected to take the latter. It may reasonably be contended that he was right. If Madame Sans-Gêne is a "cockney," as in her new dress she has been called, what else could be made of her? Much of the slang of the Revolution period would, so far as it is translatable at all, be absolutely unintelligible to nine-tenths of an audience on this side of the Channel. In English it must be English, as in German it would have to be German. Madame Sans-Gêne is a vulgarian, and the character had to be illustrated by the nearest equivalents to her turns of speech in the original play.

How far would a literal rendering into French of Sam Weller's cockney utterances be understood by Frenchmen? Consequently, it is not surprising to hear the erstwhile laundress speaking of a "nice little tea-party," bidding her people "stir their stumps," or hinting at "collaring the swag." Mr. Carr has done his work exceedingly well, though a little more compression here and there might have been advisable. His adaptation, at least, is acceptable as a superb vehicle for a brilliant display of acting on the part of Miss Ellen Terry and for the extraordinary *tour de force* performed by Sir Henry Irving in his marvellous impersonation of Napoleon.

The story of MM. Sardou and Moreau's comedy is so well known as to render anything like detailed reference to it unnecessary. In the prologue, which occurs on the 10th of August, 1792, we find Catherine Hubscher in her laundry, while, outside, signs that the Revolutionists are at work may be detected in the hurried passage of the National Guard and the excited coming and going of the gossips. Presently Catherine is left alone, to be joined a moment later by the Comte de Neipperg, who, grievously wounded, seeks an asylum. Moved by his appeal for protection, the good-hearted washerwoman thrusts him into her own bed-chamber. Hardly is this effected when her lover, Sergeant Lefebvre, enters, speedily grows suspicious of the locked door, and finally forces his way into the adjoining room. But his jealousy is quickly allayed, and the curtain falls on the reunion of the lovers. This is quite the best act in the play. It is rapid in movement, the interest never slackens, and the story is dramatic. When, however, the thread is once more taken up, nineteen years later, it would seem that the authors have lost their grasp of the plot, which has now become fragmentary and episodic, while the interest shifts at every moment. Scenes there are, notwithstanding, at once amusing, thrilling, and effective. With the love affairs of the Comte de Neipperg and the much-talked-about but never-seen Empress, it is indeed difficult to feel any sympathy, while the final unravelment of the intrigue is effected by means hardly worthy of so ingenious an inventor of theatrical surprises as Victorien Sardou. On the other hand, the scenes in which Catherine, now Duchess of Dantzig, figures in connection with her dancing-master, her shoemaker, and her milliner, although conceived in a spirit of the broadest comedy, are amusing as well as deeply interesting as the revelation of a comparatively new aspect of Miss Ellen Terry's many-sided genius. The actress, however, is seen at her best in the passage of pure comedy which takes place in the ensuing act between Catherine and Napoleon

In this, she and Sir Henry Irving secured the highest honours. A more delightful or finished piece of acting it would be impossible to conceive. Sir Henry's embodiment of *le petit caporal* is in truth a singularly convincing and carefully-studied performance. The manner in which he contrives to submerge his own personality beneath that of the character represented is in itself amazing. By some unexplained process he manages to convey the impression of the short, squat figure peculiar to Napoleon, and even to mould his own features into recognizable resemblance to those of the French Emperor. His opportunities are, of course, infinitely fewer than Miss Terry's, but with what consummate skill and matchless art he utilizes the very least of them for the benefit of the piece! Excellent also is the Fouché of Mr. Mackintosh, who successfully indicates the combined commonness of the man's nature and the striking astuteness of his penetrative mind. From among the members of an exceptionally long cast we must single out for praise the Lefebvre of Mr. Frank Cooper, the Despréaux of Mr. Norman Forbes, and the Queen of Naples of Miss Gertrude Kingston. In the matter of brilliant costumes and exquisitely-fashioned dresses, of costly appointments and sumptuous accessories, the production takes rank with anything hitherto seen at the Lyceum. These and the superb acting of Miss Terry and Sir Henry Irving himself should alone ensure for the piece a long and prosperous career.

THE PRINCESS AND THE BUTTERFLY ; OR, THE FANTASTICS.

A Comedy, in Five Acts, by ARTHUR W. PINERO. Produced at the St. James's Theatre, March 29.

Sir George Lamorant, Bart.	Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER	Princess Pannonia ..	Miss JULIA NEILSON
Edward Oriel	Mr. H. B. IRVING	Mrs. Marsh .. ..	.. Mrs. KEMMIS
Mr. St. Roche	Mr. H. V. ESMOND	Annis Marsh	Miss DOROTHY HAMMOND
Lieut.-Col. Arthur Eave	Mr. C. AUBREY SMITH	Lady Ringstead ..	.. Miss ROSE LECLERCQ
Hon. Charles Denstroude	Mr. IVO DAWSON	Lady Chichele ..	.. Miss PATTIE BELL
Mr. Adrian Mylls ..	Mr. GEORGE BANCROFT	Mrs. Sabiston ..	.. Mrs. CECIL RALEIGH
Mr. Perceval Ord ..	Mr. A. VANE-TEMPEST	Mrs. St. Roche ..	.. Miss GRANVILLE
Maxime Demailly ..	Mr. ARTHUR ROYSTON	Blanche Oriel ..	.. Miss M. HACKNEY
Major-General Sir Robert	Chichele, K.C.B.	Mrs. Ware .. ..	.. Miss JULIE OPP
	Mr. H. H. VINCENT	Fay Zuliani .. ..	.. Miss FAY DAVIS

Whatever reservations it may be needful to make, it is certain that Mr. Pinero's new comedy will take rank as one of the most notable achievements of the dramatic year. That it will appeal to the popular mind with the force exercised by some of his previous works we do not pretend to say. In his later development, Mr. Pinero has adopted an attitude somewhat similar to that chosen by Mr. George Meredith in another department of literature. Both writers would appear deliberately to have gone out of their way to defy the canons of form, symmetry, and even of common intelligence. They have become laws unto themselves, without pausing to consider whether or not the

public is prepared to accept this new departure in literary legislation. In taking such a step they obviously run a serious risk of estranging their clients. The truth of this assertion Mr. Pinero has doubtless already discovered if he has studied some of the notices published regarding *The Princess and the Butterfly*. That its performance should have evoked scorn in a quarter where the truest interests of the drama are popularly supposed to lie shows that a man may be witty, original, and daring, and yet have his meaning and his purpose wholly misunderstood, even by those believed to bring to the theatre a more than average degree of intelligence and of experience. This, however, has been more or less the fate of all pioneers since the world began, and Mr. Pinero, we are certain, can well afford to play a waiting game. His latest work is an extraordinarily clever, thoughtful, and brilliant satire upon modern manners, and yet, concurrently, it provides a wholesome, plain, and useful moral. In so far as strict dramatic form is concerned, it offends, not once, but often against tradition, and in our opinion must in that respect be condemned as imperfect. Yet at the same time one feels that Mr. Pinero is not to be judged as other men, between whom and him there exists this marked difference, that they sin through convention, and he by excess of originality. The first two acts of his new comedy have, it is true, only the slightest bearing upon the main thread of the story. But so interesting are they in themselves, so full of keen observation and scathing satire upon the follies and the foibles of the day, that one would part with a single line, or a solitary incident contained in them, only with the greatest regret.

The subject selected by Mr. Pinero for treatment in *The Princess and the Butterfly* can be indicated in half-a-dozen words. It is the malady of middle-age and its remedy. And what, indeed, would be more beautiful than the solution provided by the author? "Those who love deep never grow old. They may die of age, but they die young." Such is the truth gradually borne in upon Princess Pannonia and Sir George Lamorant, both arrived at that stage of life when men and women begin thoughtfully to consider what they have lost in the past, and may yet, perhaps, win in the future. Let it be noted here as a fact in great measure vindictory of Mr. Pinero's view, that the less one has accomplished, whether as lover, worker, or dreamer in the former, the more disposed is he to regard the latter with hesitancy and dread. To this state have come the Princess and Sir George, the first a woman who has wasted the best twenty years of her life in unsympathetic communion with an elderly and invalid husband, the second a man who at forty-five awakes

to the reality that he has done nothing, thought nothing, achieved nothing. For the unhappy pair there seems but one thing left—that they should drift into matrimony, and thereafter float down the stream together to the ocean of old age. Suddenly, however, an alternative course is revealed. The Princess finds that she is passionately adored by Edward Oriel, a preternaturally grave youth of twenty-seven, while Sir George discovers that he loves and is fondly loved by Fay Zuliani, an impulsive, irrepressible, yet singularly sweet, girl of nineteen. So eventually the two couples pair off to the pleasing tune that “Love is ever young.” Of the numerous side issues dealt with by the author we have unfortunately no space to speak in detail. With what withering force he castigates society, its inanities and its ineptitudes, its elderly young and its prematurely old men, its foolish virgins and its malicious matrons, the reader, consequently, must endeavour to imagine for himself. The piece is one to be seen, and will amply repay the closest study. With one striking exception it is fairly if not super-excellently acted. The exception is Miss Fay Davis, who, as Fay Zuliani, reveals qualities of gaiety, tenderness, and sensibility that place her quite in the front line of living comedy actresses. Miss Julia Neilson, in the part of the Princess, was exceedingly good in the passionate scenes, but scarcely so satisfactory in the lighter passages; while Mr. George Alexander played Sir George with his accustomed ease and finish. Mr. H. B. Irving proved admirable as Edward Oriel, and in smaller parts Mr. H. V. Esmond, Mr. Arthur Royston, Mr. H. H. Vincent, and Miss Rose Leclercq rendered real and very welcome service.

THE PHYSICIAN.

A Play of Modern Life, in Four Acts, by HENRY ARTHUR JONES. Produced at the Criterion Theatre, March 25.

Dr. Lewin Carey ..	Mr. CHARLES WYNHAM	Lady Valerie Camville ..	Miss MARION TERRY
Rev. Peregrine Hinde ..	Mr. ALFRED BISHOP	Mrs. Bowden	Miss E. VINING
Walter Amphiel ..	Mr. T. B. THALBERG	Mrs. Dibley	Miss CARLOTTA ADDISON
Dr. Brooker	Mr. LESLIE KENYON	Louisa Pack	Miss JOCELYN
Stephen Gurdon ..	Mr. J. G. TAYLOR	Marah	Miss VALLI VALLI
James Heboings ..	Mr. KENNETH DOUGLAS	Lizzie	Miss M. CLAYTON
John Dibley	Mr. A. E. GEORGE	Saunders	Miss D. FELLOWES
Viccars	Mr. F. H. TYLER	Edana Hinde	Miss MARY MOORE
Postman	Mr. F. VIGAY		

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's work 'for the stage is at all times characterized by two distinctive features, earnestness and sincerity of purpose. Shortcomings it may possess—errors of judgment that are simply surprising in an author of his experience; but that the writer is persistently imbued with a strong sense of the responsibility attached to his position no one can fail to recognise. In Mr. Jones's eyes the theatre is a thing of the utmost gravity, a platform from which the dramatist is called

upon to deliver his homilies with a careful regard for their far-reaching possibilities. With this opinion we should be the last to quarrel. We are, indeed, prepared to offer it full sympathy, always, however, with the reservation that there is something also to be said on the side of those who claim that recreation, pure and simple, shall form a large, if not the entire, part of an evening's entertainment. But as these latter constitute a sufficiently large majority successfully to uphold their peculiar views, it is all the more incumbent upon the minority to give a cordial and sympathetic welcome to the work of a playwright so strenuous, so zealous, and so painstaking as Mr. Jones is. *The Physician* may not be a faultless play, but the fact that it bears the impress of a thoughtful and intelligent mind entitles it at once to serious consideration. Both in regard to merits and demerits it is singularly characteristic of the author. The piece contains a really powerful story, developed with a considerable degree of skill, which, however, belongs to the category of theatrical dexterity rather than to that of genuine dramatic instinct. Amid much that is modern one detects the scent of old-fashioned conventionalism; while again and again the touch of the true student of human nature yields to the pressure occasioned by the necessities of theatric surprise. Mr. Jones, also, is a little apt to burden his plays with the jargon of the day—to give them, if we may be pardoned the expression—an appearance of up-to-dateness by the introduction of various pseudo-scientific or metaphysical allusions. Hence his work shows a disposition to smell somewhat of the lamp; it lacks that homogeneous quality which tends to create in the observer a feeling that subject, treatment, and episodic environment are absolutely necessary to, and inevitably bound up in, each other. The highest form of character-drawing is that which makes the character develop through itself, and which is wholly free from any attempt to describe personal qualifications by the easy process of labelling. Now in *The Physician* Mr. Jones is at great pains to impress upon the audience that Dr. Lewin Carey is a medical man not only highly esteemed by his colleagues, but also imbued with a strong love for his profession. To render this quite clear, Mr. Jones forces him to talk at considerable length of cancer microbes, nerve diseases, and other similar matters. But when it comes to action, Lewin Carey reveals himself to be as unlike a real physician as one could easily imagine. That Mr. Jones should descend to the use of such old theatrical tricks as listening behind curtains, the lugging in of inapposite characters for the purpose of giving a touch of "comic relief" to his piece, and so forth, is also distinctly against him. *The Physician*, on the other hand, possesses the redeeming feature of a powerful, if rather sombre,

plot, told in nervous and temperate language, and succeeds with few lapses in holding the attention from first to last.

Let us relate the story as briefly as possible. Lewin Carey is a prosperous west-end physician who has formed a *liaison* with a frivolous, heartless, and irresponsible grass-widow, named Lady Valerie Camville. Save that a change in her affections brings about the rupture of their relations, little or nothing comes of the fact. Heart-broken and stricken down with the *ennui* of life, Carey who, be it remembered, is a man bordering on fifty, determines to renounce his accustomed pursuits and hand over his practice to a country friend, Dr. Brooker. His interest, however, is re-awakened by the visit of a pretty young girl, Edana Hinde, who comes to consult him concerning her lover, Walter Amphiel. This last, unknown to his friends, is a confirmed drunkard, posing as an enthusiastic temperance lecturer. Carey speedily discovers the young man's secret, and although, meanwhile, he has himself fallen in love with Edana, loyally endeavours to win her sweet-heart back to sobriety. In this he fails, while through the merest accident Amphiel's true character is revealed to the horrified girl. Nevertheless she agrees to give him one more chance. But the disease has obtained too strong a hold upon him, and after a few months' abstention from alcohol, Amphiel yields to an irresistible impulse, and finally dies from pneumonia, the result of a cold caught during a debauch. In this way Edana is left free to bestow her hand upon Carey, whose self-denying devotion she has learned to appreciate. Mr. Charles Wyndham has seldom had a more suitable character than that of Dr. Lewin Carey, and although occasionally a little too reserved, he played it with exceptional firmness, power, and tenderness. Mr. Alfred Bishop furnished a masterly portrait of a gentle old clergyman; Mr. Thalberg was excellent as the dipsomaniac, and Mr. Leslie Kenyon made a genuine hit as Brooker, the country doctor. Although, on personal grounds, hardly fitted to play the coquette, Miss Marion Terry gave a fine account of Lady Valerie, and Miss Mary Moore a pleasing sketch of the gentle and sympathetic Edana. Praise must also be awarded Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. A. E. George, Mr. Kenneth Douglas, and Miss Carlotta Addison for good work accomplished in minor parts.

THE YASHMAK.

A Musical Play, in Two Acts. Libretto by CECIL RALEIGH and SEYMOUR HICKS. Music composed and arranged by NAPOLEON LAMBELET. Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, March 31.

Smudge	Mr. JOHN LIE HAY	Mr. Marshall ..	Mr. GEORGE HUMPHERY
Owen Moore ..	Mr. LIONEL MACKINDER	Zillah	Miss AILEEN D'ORME
The Hon. Fitzroy Lende	Mr. LAWRENCE D'ORSAY	Mary Montessor de Coursey	Miss MABEL LOVE
Mr. Dingley ..	Mr. FRED EMNEY	Dot Sinclair ..	Miss MARIE YORKE
Sir Andrew Drummond	Mr. CHARLES RILEY	Violet Delmere ..	Miss EDITH JOHNSTON
Bustapha Pasha ..	Mr. E. DAONALL	Noormahal ..	Miss TOPSY SINDEN
The Sultan of Shelock	Mr. ARTHUR NELSTONE	Balrouhador ..	Miss MAGGIE RIPLEY
The Vizier	Mr. SIDNEY HOWARD	Dora Selwyn ..	Miss KITTY LOFTUS

So far as the libretto is concerned, *The Yashmak* is about on a par with the usual run of so-called musical comedies. This is to say, that the authors reveal little originality, wit, or dexterity in the composition of their piece. The story is as commonplace as could well be imagined. Those, however, who can find in buffoonery and knock-about business a sufficiently attractive substitute for wit and humour may unhesitatingly be recommended to betake themselves to the Shaftesbury. Upon plays of the class to which *The Yashmak* belongs, if indeed it is not a glaring misuse of terms to employ the word "play" in this connection, criticism is wasted, and we are content therefore to offer a bare outline of the plot in exchange. The first act takes place at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Constantinople, owned by a Mr. Dingley, whose nephew, Owen Moore, has come thither in order to be near Dora Selwyn, one of a number of "Gaiety Girls" engaged to dance before the Sultan. In Mary, Dora's attendant, Smudge, head waiter at the hotel, recognises an old sweetheart. Presently the two girls are captured by Bustapha Pasha, who, with the view of propitiating the Sultan, proposes to present them to him as members of his Harem. Thereupon Owen and Smudge, the first disguising himself as Bustapha and the second as an English doctor, hasten to the Sultan's Palace in the hope of rescuing their sweethearts. This, after some little difficulty and risk to themselves, they eventually succeed in accomplishing. So exceedingly slight a story is, of course, merely intended to provide a thread upon which may be hung the customary number of variety "turns," songs, and dances. That some of these possess merit we do not deny, but that, for the greater part, their success is due to the cleverness of the performers rather than to the intrinsic worth of the things themselves is no less certain. Among those who by their amazing vigour and unflagging efforts helped to secure a favourable reception for the piece were Mr. John Le Hay, Mr. L. Mackinder, Mr. Arthur Nelstone, Miss Aileen D'Orme, an extremely clever and charming new-comer, Miss Mabel Love, and Miss Kitty Loftus. The music, by Mr. Lambelet, is pleasing, but, while amply fulfilling its humble purpose, by no means remarkable.

ON LEAVE.

A Farce, in Three Acts, adapted by FRED HORNER, from *Le Sursis*, by MM. SYLVANE and GASCOGNE. Produced at the Avenue Theatre, April 17.

Mr. Bernard Vaughan ..	Mr. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR	Private John Dixon ..	Mr. G. E. BELLAMY
Mr. Lecky Dobson ..	Mr. W. H. DENNY	Mr. Jackson.. ..	Mr. HARRY FORD
Lieut.-Col. Embleton ..	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP	Mrs. Vaughan ..	Miss KATE PHILLIPS
Capt. Charles Berkeley ..	Mr. CHARLES CHERRY	Miss Phyllis Henderson ..	Miss MAY PALFREY
Surgeon-Major Neale ..	Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR	Amelia Bond ..	Miss ALICE CARLTON
Major Pomeroy ..	Mr. F. J. ARLTON	Jenny Rogers ..	Miss CLARA JECKS
Lieut. Rivers ..	Mr. E. COVINGTON	Miss Kathleen Metcalfe ..	Miss ESME BERINGER

Were vulgarity synonymous with wit and buffoonery with

humour, Mr. Fred Horner's last adaptation of a French farce might be acclaimed a masterpiece. As matters stand, it can only be described as a piece as silly as it is inept, and as offensive as it is silly. The sole title to novelty which *On Leave* possesses is found in a scene in which two men, having divested themselves of coat and waistcoat, proceed to remove their trousers in sight of the audience! Imagine the state of mind of the man who in cold blood could place such a situation on paper, or that of the actors having so little sense of self-respect as to carry it into execution. No wonder that on the occasion of the first performance there were found not a few among the audience to express their disapproval of such a grossly indelicate incident in unmistakable terms! *The Theatre* has already expressed its opinion forcibly on the subject of "Nastiness on the Stage," and there is no need consequently to go over old ground. But it would be a clear dereliction of duty not to protest again in the present instance against such a public exhibition of bad taste and vulgarity. For the authors who conceived, for the adapter who retained, for the manager who approved, and for the Licensor who set his seal upon such an episode there can be absolutely no excuse. Such things may amuse and delight Parisian audiences. Let us be thankful that on this side of the Channel we can still find no enjoyment in the spectacle of two individuals appearing before the footlights in their drawers.

For the rest, *On Leave* is a feeble and invertebrate affair, without a single gleam of wit or a solitary humorous idea in it. The story is trite and commonplace, and may be summed up in a few words. Mr. Bernard Vaughan, a solicitor, although he has obtained leave of absence, pretends to his wife and daughter that he is forced to go on duty with the militia. His real reason for quitting his home may be divined. Of course there is a lady in the case, and equally of course the circumstance proves fruitful of misfortune to the gentleman most concerned. Eventually, however, he contrives to allay the suspicions of his offended spouse and to re-establish himself in her good graces. The same theme, slightly varied, has been used as the basis of innumerable farces; and as in the latest case it is handled without tact or dexterity, it will be understood how poor a thing *On Leave* is. Nor is there anything to be said for the performance, which was simply a go-as-you-please affair with the prize awarded to the actor who should succeed in out-shouting his colleagues.

IN PARIS.

At the *Gymnase* we have *La Carrière*, a comedy, in five acts, by M. Abel Hermaut. Does diplomacy, ardently embraced as a

career, really sap the foundations of all that is true, noble, nay, even human, in man? We should be sorry to think so, and we would fain encourage ourselves by reflecting an example to the contrary in our own experience; but M. Hermaut certainly insists on this depressing view of his plot. The Duc de Xaintrailles, attaché to the embassy, marries in the opening scene a genuine and charming ingénue, Yvonne. We are shown that love has but small place in his heart, hardened by diplomatic subtleties; he considers that it is "the correct thing" for an attaché to have, like Cæsar, an irreproachable wife. Later on, we find that he considers it also "the correct thing" for the husband of this irreproachable wife to continue a standing love affair with the far from irreproachable Lady Huxley, whose husband is the Ambassador himself. Discovering this intrigue, Yvonne refuses to accept the diplomatic creed; she loves this cold Xaintrailles, and she adopts the time-honoured method of showing her affection, and gaining his, by simulating an affection for someone else. This someone else appears in the nick of time in no less a person than an Archduke, who is attracted by her beauty. Whether the end justifies the means or not, her method succeeds entirely. Xaintrailles will not suffer the attentions of the Archduke to his wife, and contrives, even at the price of his own separation from Lady Huxley, to gain his exchange to another embassy. So far, good; but Yvonne, like a true ingénue, has nearly carried her game too far. Undiscovered by her husband, she has gone alone to meet the Archduke in a lonely hunting pavilion, and it is only by her own innocence and his tardy chivalry that she is protected from the natural consequence of her folly. When in the final scene she tells her husband of this compromising visit, the cool diplomat disappears, the real man shows himself, jealous, indignant; and seeing him shaken out of all his habitual control, she cries triumphantly, "Ah! then you admit you love me after all? That is what I have been aiming at all along." The plot is not novel, but the incidents are freshly handled. The scene in the pavilion is effective, the satire on diplomacy amusing, if somewhat overdone. M. Noblet was excellent in the part of Xaintrailles, and Mlle. Lecomte played Yvonne with delicacy and simplicity. M. Huguenet in his interpretation of the Archduke (perhaps the most cleverly imagined part in the whole play) made a marked success.

The Nouveau Théâtre has *A la Vie! A la Mort!* a drama in five acts, by M. Pierre Denis. A new departure—a drama, a tragedy, of our own day, represented on the stage shortly after its occurrence in real life. The hero and heroine are dead, but many of the secondary personages who were involved in this piece of modern history were actually in the theatre to witness

the counterfeit presentment of a stirring page in their own lives. Surely this is unique in theatrical records. And the play itself? In one word the apotheosis of Boulanger, a complete canonisation of a popular hero, minus even the "devil's advocate," who is on this occasion, contrary to all the laws of saint-making, carefully excluded. The play is long and monotonous, but has a touching love story. We need not dissect the five acts, which set forth political events well known to all, through the kaleidoscope of changes, shocks, and reverses. It is not Boulanger as general, but Boulanger as lover, who is the striking figure. To the end, as the title of the piece shows, he is constant in his devotion to Marguerite de Kerlin, which is shown powerfully in the fourth act, when suspicion, born of love, makes him for a moment doubt her fidelity. The height of this devotion is reached in the final scene, where he dies by his own hand over her grave. The piece has been warmly discussed here in varying criticism, but all voices unite in praising the acting of M. Darmont as Boulanger and Mlle. Blanche Dufrène as Marguerite.

Snob, a comedy in four acts, by M. Gustave Guiches, has been produced at the Renaissance. The author has appropriated one more English slang term, but does not invariably seem to be clear as to its precise meaning and application. His idea of a snob is one who tries to appear other than he actually is; one who, like his hero, Jacques Dangy, having pushed his way into an aristocratic *milieu*, would fain pose as one of that world of which he is but an outsider, admitted on sufferance. Dangy, a writer, married in his own sphere, achieves an entrance into "society." At first his idea is to advance himself professionally, to obtain "copy" by studying this novel life; but his head is turned by the flirtation which is accorded him by the Duchesse de Malmont, and he becomes her lover in good earnest. His snobbery reaches its climax when he actually desires his wife Hélène not to resent the attentions of the Duc de Malmont, because the gossip they excite is flattering to his vanity. Here, indeed, is a facile descent in morals! But, if a snob, he is not a knave. He feels sure that Hélène's character protects her from all dangers; he has no fear for her; and is as much astonished as indignant when this (as he hoped) patient Griselda turns upon him and says, "You make love to a Duchess, then the Duke shall make love to me! I, too, will be in the fashion!" Later, the Duchess and Dangy having quarrelled and separated, she tells him that Hélène is seriously compromised. A violent scene ensues between him and his wife, but she finally confesses that she had acted a part to excite his jealousy and assert her innocence. All thus ends happily, as the fairy books say. The similarity of

this plot to that of *La Carrière* may strike others as well as ourselves. In the latter, diplomatic ambition, here snobbery, equally lead to intrigue and deceit on the husband's part, and the wife's method of revenge is nearly identical in each. No doubt this is but a coincidence, and we must admit that if unfaithfulness is to be the *motif* of all French plays (and it is the standing dish in nine out of ten) it is hard for the authors to make their incidents always original. We must give unqualified praise to M. Guitry as Dangy, and to Mlle. Granier for her frank and simple rendering of Hélène. MM. Luguet, Paul Plau, Chameroy, Clerget, all acted admirably.

IN BERLIN.

Carlot Neuling has achieved a real success at the Schiller Theatre by his tragi-comedy in four acts, entitled *Die Gerechte Welt* (*The Just World*). The brothers Grossmann are partners in a big banking concern in Berlin. The firm enjoys a reputation for integrity in so high a degree that the poorer classes entrust all their little savings to it, or invest them in accordance with the advice of the brothers. Among these confiding clients is one Hügel, a mechanic, a most worthy person, who has first supported his widowed mother, then brought up his little sister, and finally taken a consumptive aunt into his home. His sister Anna has a situation given to her in the counting-house of the bank. She falls a victim to the seductions of Hugo Grossmann, a man of intensely selfish character; while the other brother, who really deserves imprisonment for fraud, just manages to escape the clutches of the law. When the trusting Hügel, who has come to the counting-house with reference to the loss of all his hard-earned savings, learns at that moment of the shame of his sister—for whom Hugo “will do as much as lies in his power”—he is overcome with indignation, and in return for a blow from Hugo's fist, wounds that gentleman with a knife. The third act ends with this scene. The fourth is enacted some years later in a provincial town where the two Grossmanns have established a bank with what has remained to them of their ill-gotten gains. Hugo has married a young lady who possesses the coveted title “von,” and plays the part of the tender husband to the life. Gerhard, who knows human nature as well as he knew how to escape the reward of justice, has plunged headlong into the stream of public philanthropy. The brothers have become so rich that they can afford the luxury of a piece of benevolence which cannot but raise them in the esteem of their fellow-citizens. Gerhard resolves on founding an orphan asylum regardless of expense, passes among the pious as one of the most

saintly of men, and sees himself about to receive in the near future the reward of virtue in the form of an Imperial Order. On the day of the dedication of the orphan asylum, at the moment when he is explaining to the vicar, in smooth and well-chosen words, that only the children of respectable parents must be admitted to the institution, Hgel and Anna come upon the scene. Both are changed and prematurely aged. Hgel has lost his health and strength in prison, where he has passed a long sentence for his assault on Hugo. Anna has lost both her youth and her beauty in the hard struggle she has had in order to obtain a living for herself and her child. They are reduced to destitution, and wish to emigrate to America, but have not even the money to pay their passage. Hugo has "no time to see his child, but will, of course, willingly do something." Anna refuses all that he offers her, save a contribution towards her passage money. She is resolved to work for her child herself, so that he may never need to know his father. While inside the house the consecration of the orphan asylum is proceeding with solemn organ music and singing, the brother and sister—innocent victims of this world's methods of justice—linger for a moment and embrace, and on this tableau the curtain descends.

The story of Saul and David is one of the most dramatic in the Bible, and the book of Samuel in which it is contained is one of the most poetic. Every line breathes the spirit of heroism, the fierce and the idyllic are duly mingled, dramatic rage contrasts with lyric sweetness, and the whole is moving and engrossing in a high degree. Adalbert von Hanstein has written a drama, entitled *King Saul*, which has been performed at the Theater des Westens, and has met with a friendly reception. Hanstein has not attempted to present the characters of the Biblical drama in a realistic way, for they possess much that is foreign to our time, and which would be spoilt by being translated into language of too modern a type. His work is pathetic in every line, and in parts it moves the spectator deeply by its strong dramatic situations. Above all, the author has endeavoured, with success, to introduce an intellectual interest into the play. This he has done by the skilful manner in which the opposition between the power of the king and the power of the priest is depicted. The former is embodied in Saul, the latter in Samuel—these are the opponents whose battles he describes. Rispa, a prisoner of Israel, who flirts in turn with Saul, David, and Abner, always with the intention of destroying the hated enemy by internal dissensions, helps to bring the drama to a natural and logical conclusion, but, except in this respect, she plays a subordinate part, as indeed does David also. The play is a good one, and should commend itself to Mr. Wilson Barrett as a possible successor to the

Daughters of Babylon. It would doubtless receive the support of those leaders of thought who desire to see the stage acting as the handmaiden of the Church and of religion. *Willehalm der Deutsche* (*Willehalm the German*), which was performed at the Berlin Opera House on the evening of the day which witnessed the unveiling of the monument to William I. in the German capital, is the work of the distinguished dramatist, Ernst von Wildenbruch. It is believed, however, to have been inspired by the present German Emperor, and it would certainly appear, from the manner in which the subject is treated, to have owed its conception to that monarch. The dramatist has chosen to tell the story of William the Great in symbolical fashion, and it is as an allegory that the dramatic legend unfolds itself before the spectator. It must be admitted, however, that he has been singularly unfortunate in his interpretation of the character of William I. Many of the noble traits which endeared William to his people have been omitted, and his great qualities as a statesman are completely ignored. Needless to say that his wonderful power of selecting the ablest men to aid him in war and peace is not referred to even in the most distant way. The piece was beautifully staged and admirably acted.

At the Berliner Theater *Marksteine*, four days of Prussian history, by Adolf Rosée, has furnished a commemoration piece. It consists of four scenes from the life of Frederick II., and does not call for detailed criticism, inasmuch as it has been purely written for the occasion, and contains nothing of striking merit. At the Königliches Opera House, Lord Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* has furnished the theme for a one-act opera, the music being by the youthful composer Victor Hausmann, and the book by Wilhelm Marschall. This work of Tennyson's is extremely popular in Germany, and some four or five different adapters have endeavoured to render it suitable for dramatic representation. For some reason, not very apparent, these attempts have met with but slight success, and this latest version of the poem has little to commend it. *Die Athenerin*, by Leo Ebermann, has been produced at the Schauspielhaus, but has not met with the same flattering reception which it enjoyed at the hands of the critics of Vienna on the occasion of its first performance some time ago.

IN VIENNA.

The subject of Johann Strauss's latest comic opera has been derived from the time of the French Revolution, as the title, *Die Göttin der Vernunft* (*The Goddess of Reason*), sufficiently indicates. The book is the work of Messrs. Willner and Buchbinder, who

have laid their plot in the period of the Terror, when the so-called *enragés* proclaimed the cult of "reason." The Goddess of Reason is the popular singer Ernestine, who, after she has become more famous in Paris by her "revelations" than by her songs, visits the camp of the French army at Chalons in order to sing her latest song to the officers. There, to her great surprise, she comes across her lover, the caricaturist Jacquelin, as well as the young Countess Nevers, who has falsely represented herself as the Goddess of Reason in order to save her life, the Convention having set a price upon her head. Add to these characters a colonel who falls in love with the genuine Goddess of Reason, a captain who entertains similar feelings for the false one, a faithful smart little chambermaid named Susette, and a landlord named Bonhomme, who help to save the Countess; add, moreover, various Jacobins, Royalists, and Terrorists, who intrigue against or mutually aid each other, hate one another or fall in love; and finally let the Goddess of Reason lose her mental balance over all this bewildering business, and it will be readily understood how amusing the piece is made, and how much applauded are the charming musical numbers introduced by the Waltz King.

Under the title of *Die Schauspieler des Kaisers* (*The Emperor's Actors*), a three-act drama, by Carl Wartenberg, has been reproduced at the Carl Theatre. The emperor's actors are the members of the Théâtre Français in Napoleon's time, and they make their appearance in Vienna again after an absence of eighteen years. The piece is not very good. *Das Liebe Geld* (*Beloved Money*), by Alexander Engel, one of the youngest of Viennese writers, has been successfully brought out at the Raimund Theatre. It tells the story of a rich lady whose daughter is loved by a poor advocate. The mamma is sceptical, and insists that the advocate is only after the money which will eventually come to her daughter. The girl is convinced of her lover's disinterestedness, and when, owing to a reverse, the mother loses all her fortune, the daughter's faith in her suitor is justified. He does all he can to save as much as possible from the shipwreck, and is duly accepted as a good and worthy son-in-law.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

Il Signor di Pourceaugnac, a comic opera, in three acts, which made its appearance early in the month at the Scala, Milan, has, in its title, a ring of familiarity which can hardly fail to strike every student of the French drama. The opera is, in fact, Molière's comedy of *M. de Pourceaugnac* in a new garb, for which, in so far as the literary form and language are concerned, Signor F. Fontana is responsible. Signor A. Franchetti, the

composer of the music, like so many other members of the modern Italian school of music, received his training in Germany, but, unlike the majority of his fellow composers, appears to be able at will to put aside the influence of his Teutonic training, and to produce work of the kind which until recent years has been representative of his native land. Such, at least, is the case with *Il Signor di Pourceaugnac*, for throughout the new opera maintains the essential characteristics of Italian music. Taken as a whole, however, the opera, though it met with a favourable reception, is hardly on a level with the standard of the works which have made productions at the Scala famous. At Pavia the new opera, *Aurora*, recently made its first appearance. Signor Alfredo Soffredini, whose earlier operas *Piccola Haydn* and *Salvatorello* had already gained for him the favourable consideration of the people of Pavia, is the author of both the words and the music. The plot is eminently modern, and contrasts the sufferings of the hands employed at a factory under the régime of a master of the old autocratic school with the improved conditions of their life when they come under the authority of a younger, more generous, and more progressive employer.

IN MADRID.

A performance given at the Apolo in honour of Señorita Pino, the chief soprano, was made the occasion of the first production of a lyrical sketch in one act, entitled *La Madre Abadesa*. The plot of the little work is novel, and in some respects manifests a spirit of daring which the author might very well have allowed to go further. The story is that of an abbess who, through the destruction of her convent by fire, is driven from her life of seclusion back into the world, and brought face to face with the man whom she had once loved, and whose faithlessness had caused her to take the veil. The situation thus produced is highly dramatic, and constitutes the central point of the work. The former admirer of the abbess, who is a man of the world in the most literal sense of the expression, seeks to renew the tender relations which his own conduct had interrupted years before, but he fails to reckon with the influence of the long period of self-denial and devotion to an ideal life which the abbess has undergone. Despite all his pleadings, the woman who at one time was willing to be his slave is now able to point out to him his utter worthlessness, and to refuse, calmly and firmly, to have anything whatever to do with him. The tragic character of the main thread of the story is at times relieved by touches of humour artistically introduced, and the sketch, viewed as a whole, though small, must be regarded as a work of a very creditable kind. At

the conclusion of the performance the author was announced to be Señor Sinesio Delgado. Señorita Pino herself played the part of the abbess. A new play by Señor Eusebio Blasco, of which much was expected, and respecting the high literary finish and the purely Spanish character of which a great deal of anticipatory comment had been written, proved a little disappointing when eventually submitted to the criticism of the public. *El Angelus*, as the new production is entitled, was brought out on the boards of the Comedia, and, undeniably as it savours of the pure Spanish stage and bears the stamp of careful writing, certain blanks in the chain of interest by which it is marked destroy all likelihood of its good qualities being properly appreciated. Moreover, the audience to which it was presented was critical to the point of expressing dissatisfaction with the working out of the incidents of the plot. One of the chief points of the story is the identity of the illegitimate child of Colonel Molina, and when that gallant officer declares his love for the heroine, Maria, and the solemn sounding of the Angelus from the neighbouring church suggests that the turning point of the plot has been reached, the audience appeared to consider that, according to the canons of dramatic convention, the revelation obviously about to be made should be that the Colonel was proposing marriage to his own daughter. When, therefore, the situation gave birth to the fact that it was Andrés, a rival for the affections of Maria, who was the Colonel's child, the audience felt hurt at thus having their expectations and their judgment trampled upon, and did not hesitate to say so. In spite of this little difference of opinion, however, Señor Thuillier and other interpreters of the leading parts received many evidences of appreciation of their efforts to make the occasion a success.

IN NEW YORK.

At Daly's Theatre two plays have recently been produced, affording Miss Ada Rehan opportunities of presenting two women as widely separated as the poles. The earlier was *Meg Merrilies*, an adaptation by Mr. Robert W. Chambers of *Guy Mannering*, and in it Miss Rehan played the Witch of Ellangowan—a performance at once picturesque, weird, and forceful. *Meg Merrilies* is not by any means a “well-made play,” and, in spite of Miss Rehan's acting, culminating in a splendid scene wherein Meg meets her death at the hands of Glossin, the play failed to attract. The second production was Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, *The Wonder*, played as brightly and as freshly as it must have done upon its original production at Drury Lane. Miss Rehan was, of course, quite at home as Violante, who is

ever driving her lovers to desperation, and giving them, all unwittingly, cause for the fiercest jealousy. Mr. Charles Richman as Don Felix—a part intimately associated here with the name of Lester Wallack—again displayed his genuine comedy powers. His love, his jealousy, and his intoxication, assumed for the purpose of extricating himself from a very awkward position, were the best points of the performance. M. Alphonse Daudet's play *L'Artésienne*, adapted by Mr. C. H. Meltzer and Mr. Willy Schutz, together with the music composed for the play by Georges Bizet, has achieved a *succès d'estime* at the Broadway. The music of the author of *Carmen* is fully appreciated; but New Yorkers do not seem just now to be in the mood for sad things. As a proof of this, the most successful production of the month was undoubtedly *Miss Manhattan*, an extravaganza by Mr. George V. Hobart, produced at Wallack's. It is of the usual musical comedy type, and thoroughly localised in the matter of scenes, dresses, and topical allusions. Another play of the same class has proved very popular at the Knickerbocker, *The Serenade*, by Mr. Harry B. Smith, music by Mr. Victor Herbert. It tells the story of a serenade, which, sung by a swarthy Spaniard, has won for him the love of a beautiful girl. But it so happens that other persons have learnt the melody, whence complications arise. At the Murray Hill Theatre *A Divorce Cure*, adapted from the French of M. Sardou by Mr. Harry St. Maur, was well received, in spite of the impossibility of its theme. An elderly husband, whose wife has a lover, consents to allow the young man to pay his addresses to his wife for a period of six months, at the end of which time, if they are still of the same mind, the husband will obtain a divorce. Miss Emily Bancker, as the wife, was the mainstay of the piece. In a curtain raiser Miss Bancker played admirably as an actress placed in circumstances resembling those of *Tragedy and Comedy*. In *The New Dominion*, described as a character study, Mr. Clay Clement, the author, presents a faithful picture of a type endeared to all who know Professor Goodwillie. Miss Olga Nethersole has appeared in Signor Giacosa's sombre drama, *The Wife of Scarii*, at the Garden Theatre, scoring a success for herself, if not for her author. It is another play of the "French triangle" type, but sordid in incident and unrelieved by gleams of wit or humour. As Scarii Mr. Robert Pateman shared almost equal honours with Miss Nethersole, who, in a part like the wife of Scarii, passionate yet restrained, is seen to greater advantage than in those in which she attempts to picture such wild abandonment as Mme. Bernhardt alone is mistress of. Mr. John Hare has repeated at the Columbia Theatre, Brooklyn, his New York triumphs.

Echoes from the Green Room.

M. SARDOU has sent to the Lyceum a long telegram expressing his delight at the "great success" of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, and asking Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry to accept his warmest congratulations on the result. He also tendered his thanks to the ladies and gentlemen engaged in the performance.

M. COQUELIN was among the brilliant company at the Lyceum on the first night of *Madame Sans-Gêne*. "Miss Terry," he says, though by no means disposed to undervalue Mme. Réjane, "has won my heart. She is full of gaiety, and enters fully into the spirit of the rôle. Her exquisite freshness in the laundry scene, when she discomfits that sly conspirator, Fouché, by putting a hot hissing iron near his cheek, and her movements in the scene in the Emperor's study, twenty years later, when she astonishes the same Fouché, who has become Duke of Otranto, by the brilliant schemes which she explains to him, and which he successfully adopts, stands unsurpassed. She is natural, bright, impulsive, and embodies the character from first to last. Sir Henry Irving's realisation of Napoleon is—even to a professional actor—an astonishing performance. His incarnation of the great Emperor is superb all through the two important final acts of the play."

WHEN Mr. Clement Scott finds that he has made a mistake he is frankly ready to admit it. Nearly three years ago he expressed a doubt whether so poetic and refined an actress as Miss Terry could play *Madame Sans-Gêne*. Mr. Davenport Adams, it may be remembered, had something to say in these pages on such "criticism in advance." "Ellen Terry's friends," writes Mr. Scott in his notice of the latest Lyceum production, "wanted to see if she could get out of herself. She has proved that she can, and and it has pleased her to prove it. But," he adds, "*cui bono?*" Another critic of acting, no less acute in this way, answers the question. "Instead," he says, "of lamenting over Imogen, Beatrice, and Ophelia, I am delighted to see such a brilliant creation, the most brilliant our stage has had for many a day." Indeed, no one who saw Miss Terry as Nance Oldfield could doubt that she was versatile enough to do justice to *Madame Sans-Gêne*.

M. SARDOU, in an interview with a Paris correspondent, recently spoke of the genesis of *Madame Sans-Gêne*. "It was in 1892. Porel had just taken the lease of the Eden Theatre. One day M. Moreau, my able collaborator in *Cléopâtre*, informed him that he had just written a play illustrating the history of the Empire in 1812. 'A play about Napoleon!' repeated Porel, 'this is really an astonishing coincidence. I have been thinking for these last few days how successful Réjane would be in a comedy of that period. When are you going to read it to me?' A few weeks after this conversation had taken place, Moreau, having put the last touches to his work, came to submit it to the manager of the Eden Theatre, who felt, however, somewhat disappointed. He had, in truth, expected a light play sparkling with wit and life, and the young author brought him a weird and wild drama." Before long the dramatist consulted M. Sardou, and in collaboration with each other they produced *Madame Sans-Gêne* as it now stands.

It is not wholly improbable that the Comédie Française will come to London during the ensuing season.

MR. PINERO, happily recovering from an attack of influenza, which came upon him during the rehearsals of his latest play, has gone away for a rest. Another sufferer from influenza has been Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, who, however, was sufficiently well by the 10th of April to be present at the first performance at the Lyceum of *Madame Sans-Gêne*.

MR. ARTHUR COLLINS, as one of a syndicate, is now the manager of Drury Lane Theatre.

CONTRARY to a recent rumour, Mr. Tree has not abandoned the idea of reviving *Julius Cæsar*, which will occupy his attention directly after the opening of his new theatre.

THE *Daughters of Babylon* was withdrawn at the Lyric on April 10, when Mr. Wilson Barrett stated that he might give the piece again, and had in contemplation revivals of *Hamlet*, *Virginius*, and *Othello*.

MR. WILLARD opened his fifth and last week at Chicago early in April with a revival of the *Professor's Love Story*, ending with *The Middleman*. He was immediately followed by Mr. Hare.

"It must be distinctly understood," the New York *Spirit of the Times* pleasantly remarks, "that if all the other actor-managers of London are knighted" on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee, "and Willard omitted, simply because he happened to be in this country, the American Ambassador will be directed to protest at the Court of St. James, and, if necessary, a warship will be sent to blockade the Isle of Wight. Mr. Willard cannot be eligible for the Presidency of the United States without an amendment of the Constitution; but his just claims can be enforced by our Government while he is a resident in this country. The Arbitration Treaty," the writer grimly adds, "has not yet been ratified."

MR. WILLARD has secured the American rights of *The Physician*.

MME. MELBA, who is still in the south of France, has, owing to an attack of influenza, decided not to accept engagements between this and the time of her appearance at Covent Garden.

Miss REHAN's health is so indifferent that she is unable to appear in Mr. Daly's revival of *The Tempest*, Miss Nancy McIntosh taking her place.

MME. NORDICA sailed from New York to Europe early in April, and will be in France until the opening of the season at Covent Garden. As Brunnhilde and Isolde she will wear the costumes designed for the late Frau Klafsky in those parts.

MME. MODJESKA lately arrived at San Francisco, there to recover from what has been a trying illness.

SIGNORA DUSE, who lately had most successful engagements in St. Petersburg and Berlin, has, like Sir Henry Irving, the infinite capacity for taking pains. She attends to the minutest details of stage management, and while she was at Berlin the director of the Imperial Theatre went behind the scenes every night to take notes.

MME. BERNHARDT, who took to sculpture in early life as a diversion, has just finished her bust of M. Sardou, which is exhibited in the Salon of the Champs Elysées this season.

THE incursion of foreign players seems this year likely to assume even more threatening proportions than it has in years past. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt will, as we have already announced, occupy the Adelphi

Theatre ; Mme. Réjane is to open at the Lyric on June 25, and will by playing Madame Sans-Gêne afford opportunity for an interesting comparison ; the charming Mlle. Jane May has taken the Royalty for a short season, beginning on the 17th of this month ; and we hear, too, that Signora Duse is likely to pay us a visit, and repeat her triumphs of former years. She will, it is said, appear in an Italian version of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. But where is the French translation of this piece which Mme. Sarah Bernhardt was stated long ago to have in preparation ?

IN the fulness of time *Under the Red Robe* will give place at the Haymarket to a piece by Mr. George Bernard Shaw, which, in its turn, will be succeeded by an adaptation of Mr. Barrie's *Little Minister*. The latter play will not follow the novel at all closely, but will be rather an original comedy, founded on the relations between Gavin Dishart and the charming young woman who wins his heart in the guise of an "Egyptian," or, to put it in a more familiar form to Southrons, of a gipsy.

SIR WALTER BESANT suggests that we should have a Day of Celebration—a day to be celebrated in all parts of the Empire—and that it should be on April 23, the birthday and deathday, according to all appearance, of Shakspeare. Even the American people, the novelist thinks, might after a time be willing to join in this act of worship. And this might be so apart, of course, from the insignificant minority who are so blind to essential differences of intellect as to believe that Shakspeare's plays were written by Bacon.

MR. PINERO and Mr. Comyns Carr are collaborating upon an operatic drama, to which Sir Arthur Sullivan will set the music. It will appear at the Savoy Theatre.

IT is not unlikely that when the Carl Rosa company take possession of Covent Garden Theatre for their autumn season of opera, Puccini's opera on Murger's *Vie de Bohême* will be included in their repertory. All who have laughed over these vastly entertaining *scènes* will hope to see this probability fulfilled. Schaunard and Colline, Rodolphe and Marcel, Musette and Mlle. Mimi, ought to be delightful on the stage if they are cleverly handled. Puccini, it will be remembered, composed the opera, based on *Manon Lescaut*.

THE new chairman of the Theatres and Music Halls Committee of the London County Council is Mr. J. F. Remnant, and the vice-chairman Mr. R. Roberts.

M. FILON's essays in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on the modern English stage have been translated by Mr. Frederic Whyte, and will be published shortly with an introductory essay by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones.

IN regard to a paragraph in our last issue, we are asked by Mr. Morley Roberts, to whom we apologise for our mistake in the matter, to say that he is *not* Mr. Stanley Jones.

THE statue of Mrs. Siddons on Paddington Green will be unveiled by Sir Henry Irving at noon on June 14.

MR. BOURCHIER has purchased the English and Colonial rights of M. Hervieu's *Loi de l'Homme*, lately produced at the Comédie Française.

IT was announced some time ago that Mr. George Alexander had commissioned Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy to write a dramatic version of *The Sowers*, Mr. H. S. Merriman's excellent tale of Russian life. Now it is said that Mr. Tree has secured a play founded on the book by Mr. Sydney Grundy. Can both statements be correct ? No doubt the novel would make

a good stage piece if it were dramatized with great skill, but the task would be by no means an easy one. In this connection it is amusing to read what Mr. Stephen Fiske, in the *New York Spirit*, says about the turning of popular stories into plays:—"To dramatise any novel is easy if the following rules be strictly observed: First, go to some place where the author of the novel cannot get at you, even for a social call; second, read the story carefully, and note the names of the characters; third, throw your only copy of the book into the fire; fourth, take such incidents, situations, and characters as are dramatically necessary to give plot, consistency, clearness, and effect, and re-write the dialogue, so that it will talk as well as it reads; fifth, look the author out of the theatre during the rehearsals. Then you will have a good play, and the author will be delighted to share the royalties with you and call himself a dramatist. Any deviation from this programme is fatal; but adhere to it strictly, and any popular novel can be turned into a popular play."

MR. EDWARD ROSE has just finished a romance of the Wars of the Roses, which Mr. Alexander will probably produce next in order to Mr. Carton's *Tree of Knowledge*. Mr. Rose has lately kept his attention to novel adaptations, but he has of course made experiments before now in original dramatic compositions.

THE cast for *John Gabriel Borkman*, which the New Century Theatre is about to give at a series of matinées, is certainly a very strong one, including as it does Miss Geneviève Ward, Miss Robins, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. W. H. Vernon, and Mr. James Welch. Ibsen has undoubtedly a great attraction for actors and actresses, no doubt because he understands so well *l'art du théâtre*. If only his disciples had not put it into his head that he is a philosopher and a great social reformer, he might have given us a number of really good stage pieces.

AN interesting action for libel was tried last month. In February the *St. James's Budget* had a paragraph to the effect that "that clever and delightful actress, Miss Marion Terry, seen on the boards all too seldom of late, will soon desert her profession altogether, for it is now an open secret that as soon as their term of mourning shall have passed, Miss Terry is to be married to her brother-in-law, Mr. Morris." This, it was held, implied that the plaintiff had resolved not to seek fresh professional engagements, and also contemplated an illegal act. The defendant, Mr. Steinkopff, conspicuously printed an apology, which, however, was regarded by the plaintiff as inadequate. Miss Terry clearly denied both the statements made, and the jury awarded her £500 damages.

ONE can hardly talk nowadays of the "connections between the aristocracy and the stage." They are so closely united that there is practically no division between them. Thus, when Miss Iris Beerbohm Tree was baptised the other day, her godmother was the Duchess of Portland, while her sponsors include the Marquis of Granby and Lord Rowton. One notices, too, that Miss Nellie Farren's jewels—a collection that many a peeress might covet—sold for £2,200; and for a fortune made mainly by theatrical speculation Mr. Augustino Gatti's £167,000 (as shown by the will) is sufficiently large to make other kinds of speculators extremely envious.

THE Manchester Shakspearean revivals of *Henri IV.* last year, and *Antony and Cleopatra* this spring, have been successful enough to warrant the undertaking of *Macbeth* in 1898. Mr. William Mollison is to have the title-rôle (this would hardly suit the taste of a London audience), and it is possible that Mrs. Beerbohm Tree may be seen as Lady Macbeth.

THE excellent performance given recently at Queen's Hall of M. Saint-Saëns' magnificent *Samson and Delila*—magnificent in parts if not as a sustained whole—seem to have stimulated the Covent Garden management to make an attempt to arrange for its production during the season. With this end in view, they inquired whether M. Saint-Saëns would consent to alter the names of his characters, and transform the subject of the opera from sacred to secular. The composer, however, declined, saying the proposed change was out of the question, as indeed it is. Of course there are several cases of operas being treated in this way, notably Rossini's *Moses in Egypt*, which became *Peter the Hermit*; but *Samson and Delila* would lose too much in the process of change.

YET another incursion of woman into a field of occupation hitherto occupied exclusively by man is spoken of in theatrical society. The rumour goes that the important part of prompter is to be regarded henceforth as more suited to the weaker sex. There is, in truth, a good deal to be said in favour of such a change. A voice soft, gentle, and low, "an excellent thing in woman," seems certainly better adapted for murmuring the much-needed aids to memory so often required on first nights, and sometimes on other nights too, than manly tones suitable enough "to threaten or command," but hardly so fitted for a duty that demands the production of the smallest possible volume of sound. It is hardly likely, however, that the men will abdicate without a protest.

MR. SHIEL BARRY died in a condition of extreme poverty. A fund to provide for the urgent needs of his widow and children is being raised. Sir Henry Irving has, with his usual generosity, headed the subscription list, and it is hoped to secure enough money to provide for the unfortunate actor's family, at any rate, for some little time.

MR. G. W. GODFREY, who died suddenly on April 10, at his residence in Gloucester terrace, Hyde-park, was one of the class of Civil Service officers, who, like Mr. Ernest Rendall and Mr. Henry Craik, have distinguished themselves in literature. For many years a clerk at the Admiralty, from which he retired on a pension three years ago, he was the author of several plays, which obtained more than a passing popularity. Among these were *Queen Mab*, *The Queen's Shilling* (adapted from the French), *The Parvenu*, *Vanity Fair*, and *My Milliner's Bill*. His only failure was *The Misogynist*, produced at the St. James's a year or two ago. He had a pleasing wit of a somewhat cynical and biting kind; and all his pieces had a character peculiar to themselves. The principal players in his pieces were Mrs. John Wood, Mr. Arthur Cecil, and Mr. and Mrs. Kendal.

ST. GEORGE'S HALL, long the home of the popular German Reeds, reopened at Easter under new management, and with the title of the *Matinée Theatre*. Variety would seem to be the chief thing aimed at, and certainly no one could complain either of the diversity or the length of the programme provided. What it chiefly lacks is that element of wholesome fun which is essential to the success of such an entertainment.

MR. ADAIR FITZGERALD has prepared a new version of *Rip Van Winkle*, in which Mr. Fred Storey will make his first real appearance in serious drama as the hero. Mr. FitzGerald has gone back for his inspiration to the original of Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, the old German legend of "Peter Klaus of the Kyffhausen Mountains." It is proposed to try the piece at a *matinée* first during the present month.

MR. LEOPOLD WAGNER has in the press a work on Authorship, one section being devoted to Playwriting.

MR. EDGAR PEMBERTON, of the *Birmingham Daily Post*, is a money maker as a dramatist. No fewer than three of his adaptations—*Esmond*, *Sydney Carton*, and *Edmund Kean*—are being played in the provinces by Mr. Edward Compton's company with conspicuous success. Before long, perhaps, we may see his name in a London playbill.

SIGNOR TAMAGNO, as might have been expected, has achieved a fine success at the Paris Opéra as Othello, his singing being well-nigh perfect.

Frédégonde is in active rehearsal at the Comédie Française.

M. SARDOU may or may not have written himself out. The sudden and unexpected collapse of his *Spiritisme*, however, has not damped his ardour. He has in hand no fewer than four plays, will not accept any more commissions until he has completed them, and has enough plots in his notebook to last him for the remainder of his life.

M. SARDOU holds that his *Spiritisme* failed because it was a decade in advance of the times. In that case, as a writer in the *Revue d'Art Dramatique* asks, why did he not keep it in his desk for another ten years? Or is it not the fact that the times are not ten years ahead of him?

M. MAURICE ORDONNEAU, the translator of *Charley's Aunt* (*La Marraïne de Charley*), which ran with so much success and for so long at the Bouffes-Parisiens, has undertaken the same kind office for *Niobe*, which is to be seen shortly at the same theatre.

COLONEL MAPLESON has definitely settled in Paris, and has been elected President of the International Society of Music in that city.

A STATUE of Alexandre Dumas *fils* is to be set up in the Place Malesherbes, near that of his father. The Comédie Française contributes 2,000f. to the cost.

M. PIERRE DE LANO has in preparation a play illustrating the Court of Napoleon III., with the Empress Eugénie as one of its principal figures. Whether it is well or not to introduce living personages upon the stage is a question we need not stay to discuss at this point. As the author is an anti-Imperialist, the performance, if allowed to take place, may be expected to cause some disorder.

THE death is announced of Signor Gallina, the author of several pleasant domestic comedies in Venetian dialect. Like Sheridan, he passed away in extreme poverty, but was honoured with an imposing funeral. Bigotry in regard to the drama is far from being extinct in Italy. No priest accompanied the playwright to the grave, but a little child carried a cross before the coffin. The "Goldoni of to-day," as he was often called, was only forty years of age.

THE late Johannes Brahms, like certain other celebrated musicians, Rubinstein and Bülow for examples, had a biting wit, which sometimes led him to say things more amusing than courteous. A 'cellist who had accompanied him on one occasion referred to his rather hard touch on the piano with the remark, "I can't hear myself playing." "You're a lucky fellow," retorted the *maestro*, adding one more to the list of his enemies. He never married, and he never composed an opera. The two undertakings, he declared, were very much alike; he could never make up his mind to take the plunge, "though," he added, "if he did write an opera and it failed, he would certainly have another try."

Yet another acknowledgment of the influence of the Press. In La Scala,

Milan, a large room, with every facility for writing, telephoning, and telegraphing, has been provided for the musical critics.

IT is announced in New York that Messrs. Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau will not direct grand opera at the Metropolitan after the close of the present season.

THERE was a memorable gathering at Delmonico's towards the end of March, when the American Dramatists' Club and the managers of America entertained at dinner the senators who supported the anti-piracy amendment to the Copyright Law. Mr. Bronson Howard took the chair. He made some excellent speeches, but was scarcely accurate in saying that the amendment was the "first recognition in principle by any nation on earth of brain product as absolute property."

MANY good actors of the legitimate drama in America have within the last two or three years transferred their attention to the vaudeville stage, the latest of them being Mr. Maurice Barrymore.

MR. JOHN DREW has signed a new contract to remain under Mr. Frohman's management for three years more, and will play *Rosemary* all this season. Mr. Frohman will pay forfeits to the authors of *Under the Red Robe* and *A Man in Love* for failure to produce their plays according to arrangement.

M. SARDOU was quite mistaken in supposing that he had hit upon a new idea in his *Spiritisme*. The materialisation of a supposed spirit for stage purposes had previously been employed by Mr. Edward E. Kidder, the American dramatist, in his *Shannon of the Sixth*, a story of the Indian Mutiny, written more than a year and a half ago.

MISS NETHERSOLE, it is understood, thinks of appearing in London as the heroine of Mr. Thomas Bailey Hedrick's play, *Judith and Holofernes*.

MME. DE NAVARRO (Mary Anderson) has sold her house in West Thirty-Eighth Street, New York City.

MR. WILSON LARKAGE is credited with an intention to produce this season a new spectacular drama, *King and Player*.

MISS ULMAR has left New York for Paris, but will return in the autumn.

MME. NEVADA, the American prima donna, has been compelled by ill-health to forego an engagement in Madrid, and has returned to Paris.

MR. WINTER, the critic of the *Tribune*, is apt at times to be a little vague. For instance, speaking of the latest version of *Guy Mannering*, he allowed his pen to run away with him as follows in regard to Meg Merrilies:—"The part, when sympathetically apprehended, deeply stirs the imagination, and awakens a strange, wild, passionate, half delirious feeling—a poetic frenzy, that must express itself with a certain designed extravagance, the large, free, pathetically grotesque manner of disordered nature, swift, startling, ominous, vehement, but always dominant with imperial power." It would be interesting to know what this exactly means.

MRS. POTTER and Mr. Bellew ended their tour in New Zealand in March, and have returned to Melbourne by way of Tasmania.

THE THEATRE.

JUNE, 1897.

Our Watch Tower.

THE CHURCH AND THE STAGE.



NOT the least remarkable feature of the long reign which all sections of the community are about to celebrate is the change it has seen in the attitude of the Church towards the Stage. For more than one reason that change deserves the attention of those who would trace the progress of intelligent and liberal thought in this country. In its earliest forms here, as everyone knows, the Drama was, as Mr. Gladstone said at the dinner in honour of

Charles Kean on his retirement from the management of the Princess's Theatre, nearly forty years ago, a "handmaid to Christianity." Following an example set by their French brethren, undoubtedly the originators of the idea, the English clergy, aware of the inborn taste of mankind for the dramatic, got up Mysteries and Miracles as a means of disseminating religious knowledge among people hardly accessible in any other way. From one point of view, of course, this came to be regarded as a serious error. Aided by a century of increasing intellectual agitation, and then by the genius of Shakspeare and others, a secular stage made itself a formidable rival to the pulpit. Consequently, the Church, without going to the length of excommunicating the player, as Paris did, turned bitterly against their old ally; and the Puritans, rising to supreme power, suppressed the theatres altogether. It became the custom to treat the whole theatrical profession as rogues and vagabonds in the eye of the law—a notion which, as a writer in these pages conclusively pointed out about two years ago, is quite fallacious. Unfortunately, the abominations of the Restoration drama, so well exposed by Jeremy Collier, strengthened the hands of the Church in this matter, although Tillotson, "discarding bigotry

with his peruke," did not object to be seen arm-in-arm with Betterton. And the prejudice so created against the Stage was to last through many generations, in spite of high gifts and purely artistic ambition. Within living memory, however, a change in this respect has become apparent. The Church acknowledges the influence of the Drama, and many of the clergy, prelates not excepted, are to be found among the audiences at theatres in which intellectual entertainments are provided.

It has been reserved for the present year—the year of the Diamond Jubilee—to witness a striking step in the process of burying the old hatchet of which we have spoken—the appearance of a player at a public function in the foremost of our cathedrals. On the last day of May, after the issue of the present number of *The Theatre*, Sir Henry Irving, a master of what Voltaire, no mean judge on the subject, termed the finest, the rarest, and the most difficult of arts, will recite Tennyson's *Becket* in the chapter-house of Canterbury Cathedral, almost at the very spot where, according to tradition, the sturdy and high-minded Archbishop met his death. Erected in the fifteenth century by Courtenay and Arundel, this chapter-house, with its circular stone bench for the monks of old, over whom the prior and other dignitaries sat, has lately been restored in a reverent spirit, and will be reopened by the Prince of Wales towards the end of May. In a small but not unimportant way, it may be stated, Sir Henry Irving was part-author of the impressive play he intends to read within these walls. As originally written, *Becket* could hardly be produced on the stage with any prospect of success. The actor-manager of the Lyceum, quick to perceive its beauties, suggested a variety of alterations in it to the poet, who adopted them all. In the result, a "dramatic poem" was transformed into an effective play, as every reader of the two will remember. But the new interest thus aroused in *Becket* is only slight in comparison with the significance of the incident with which we are dealing. The invitations to Sir Henry Irving's recitation have been personally issued by the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Farrar, whose works on the origin and progress of Christianity will probably have more effect than a thousand sermons. It is certainly a memorable fact that a player, however gifted, scholarly, and self-respecting, should be asked to read a play within the precincts of a cathedral which for so many centuries has been the ecclesiastical centre of England.

Another indication of this *rapprochement* between the Church and the Stage in its highest aspect, of the slow but certain extinction of the needless hostility and prejudice long manifested by the former towards the latter, is to be found in a brief speech

delivered by the Archdeacon of London at the meeting held last month in the Criterion Theatre to consider the proposal to found an institution for the benefit of actors' orphans. Dr. Sinclair, who to some may seem very young for his position, is probably out of touch in one or two respects with older ecclesiastics. Like a considerable section of the new clergy, he is able to see, and has the frankness to recognise, the peculiar influence which the Drama, directly and indirectly, exercises upon the people. Like other conspicuous divines of our days, he would not be ashamed to be seen in the stalls of the Lyceum, or at any theatre in which a pure and intellectual enjoyment is offered. He has no craving for a cheap notoriety, but always insists upon looking at facts straight in the face. "What," he asked on the occasion referred to, "would be the good of a national church if it did not come forward from time to time to promote works of good?" He "believed the mission of the Stage to be a high one." No doubt it is, in spite of the obscenities imported into it by managers who might be expected to have a keener sense of what is due to their calling, their rank, and their influence. Readers of *The Theatre* are not likely to forget what we said a few months ago as to "Nastiness on the Stage." But, in the words of Shakspeare, where is the palace whereinto foul things intrude not? Whatever its shortcomings may be, the Drama must always be a potent factor in our life and thought, and Archdeacon Sinclair, a prominent representative of the clergy, is alive to its importance, its responsibilities, and its aspirations.

Portraits.

MISS ROSE LECLERCQ.

THERE are not many better judges of acting than Mr. Pinero ; and, as it is known that he takes an active share in settling the casts of his plays, we may be pretty sure when a particular player figures again and again in his comedies, that the fortunate one has undeniable talent for comedy acting. Thus it is in the case of Miss Rose Leclercq, one of the most capable comedians on our stage, and quite the cleverest representative we have of the *grande dame de par le monde*, to use Brantôme's time-honoured phrase. In *The Cabinet Minister*, in *The Amazons*, in *The Benefit of the Doubt*, and, latest success of all, in *The Princess and the Butterfly*, she has achieved veritable triumphs, and delighted all audiences by her characteristic humour, her finished style, and her pointed, incisive delivery of the author's witty lines. Even on the French stage it may be doubted whether any acting in this particular line could be seen to excel that of Miss Leclercq at her best, and she has fortunately avoided the pitfall, into which so many players of this class fall both in Paris and in London, of making each separate character represented merely a repetition of the last. Her Marchioness in *The Amazons* and her Bishop's wife in *The Benefit of the Doubt* are quite enough to show this, the touches of pathos so admirably introduced into each surprising some even of her warmest admirers. Beginning her career with Charles Kean, and actually making her first appearance before the Queen at Windsor in a performance of *The Tempest*, Miss Leclercq has had a wide range of theatrical experiences. A long course of melodrama (including *After Dark*) was succeeded by a return to Shakspeare with Phelps at the Princess's, Desdemona being followed by Mrs. Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. When Mr. Tree produced this play Miss Leclercq figured as Mistress Page, and a very excellent performance it was. It is impossible here to name even a tithe of the parts she has played even since 1877, when she made a great advance in public favour as the heroine of *That Lass o' Lowrie's*. Olivia in *Twelfth Night* at the Lyceum, Lady Bellaston in *Sophia*, Lady Bawtrey in *The Dancing Girl*, Mrs. Fretwell in *Sowing the Wind*—these are a few of her most notable successes in addition to the Pinero plays already mentioned. Of an actress of so much genuine humour and ability it may be said without undue exaggeration that she touches nothing she does not adorn.



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MISS ROSE LECLERCQ.

The Round Table.

LETTERS TO SOME DRAMATIC CRITICS.

TO JOSEPH KNIGHT, ESQ.

SIR,—In addressing you, the Deacon (I borrow the word from Messrs. Stevenson and Henley, and prefer it to the more usitate French term *Doyen*)—in addressing you, I say, as Deacon of London play-critics, I beg to begin by taking off my hat with as much ceremony as used to be, and perchance still is, deemed right in setting one's foot upon the stage of the Théâtre Français. I have seen that ceremony neglected by one distinguished actor, whose neglect was rebuked with great tact and courtesy by another equally distinguished actor. But I do not wish to incur a rebuke in this matter from my equals or my betters, and therefore, again, I salute you, not only with proper ceremony, but also with a very true respect born of a long acquaintance with your excellent work. And, please note that I use the epithet in its truest sense, as indicating a quality which but few attain. Your work as a critic of plays and actors (I am not for the moment concerned with other criticism) has been familiar to me for more years than I care to count, while I can count, and that with great pleasure, the names of certain younger critics who have learnt much from you. You have always had, and, of course, still have two qualities which, in too many quarters, have latterly grown to be regarded as defects. In writing of these qualities I, of course, mean that your criticism is invariably that of a scholar and a gentleman. You know your subjects with learning as well as with intuition, and were any evidence wanted as to this I need but call one witness only, your *David Garrick*, a book which, in its comparatively short compass, is strangely full of knowledge of the man, the actor, the time, and the many curious ways in which the pressure of that particular time affected the actor, the man, and the courtier, all of which characters were familiar enough to the subject of your book. You have not disguised Garrick's foibles, but, being yourself more a master than a student of *quidquid agunt homines*, you have done what is infinitely better. You have understood them and explained them without abating a jot of the actor's merits.

You have pointed out, among these merits, one that was not always too common, though one can find instances of it now, in the case of actors who combine managing with acting. "That he was sincere," you wrote, "in his endeavour to secure the best company obtainable will not be doubted." You were certainly in the right, and supported your statement by quoting such names as, among others, Barry, Macklin, Woodward, Mrs. Cibber, Kitty Clive, and Peg Woffington. Whether you were equally right in concluding that there can have been no "genuine cordiality" between the great Lexicographer and what he once called "Punch" is more open to doubt, but that statement you supported by apt quotations, and you finished the chapter in which it appears by the inexpugnable assertion that Garrick was "always sagacious, prudent, and a little calculating." You might indeed have turned the *little* into a stronger word; but no doubt there, as in your modern criticisms, you were influenced by the fault, if fault it is, of a disposition most unwilling to emphasise demerit and most willing to detect reason for applause. You ended your book in a very perceptive and "wise-like" manner by saying that "a curiously complex, interesting, and diversified character is that of Garrick. Fully to bring it before the world might have taxed his own powers of exposition." This is very true; and it was characteristic of your own prudence and self-command in writing that you tried no further than you could feel yourself sure of your way. Yet, though we have within our own reach all the books of reference which you consulted for the production of a volume of great worth, yet one could wish that you yourself had seen the great actor, and had left on record your impressions concerning him, especially as regards the vexed question as to his supremacy in tragedy or in comedy. For, although you would have written, as you do of actors now living, with an extraordinary or rather a wonderfully well-studied temperance, yet the playgoer of insight and practice would have been able to read between your courteous and well-graced lines, and to form a truer opinion as to the actor's powers and method than he can get from the conflicting opinions collected in all the contemporary records, from which you wisely refused to form an absolutely definite judgment concerning a man whose acting you had never seen.

And this brings me back to the one fault (and I repeat the words "if fault it is") seen in your everyday method of criticism. You leave too much to be read between the lines. I protest that I prefer your way, and that infinitely, to the way of much less experienced and less kindly persons, who, when they are entrusted with the pen or broomstick of criticism, have for their

chief idea a desire to lay stoutly about them, and give an idea of their own overweening importance. Not the less, the tempering which you consistently observe of justice with mercy does sometimes remind one, with a difference, of Falstaff's bread and sack. You are so delightfully averse from hurting anyone's feelings, that you must often give an incomplete notion of your real and critical opinion to all who are not experts. And, observe, the thing cuts both ways, as it inevitably must with a person of your just and equitable leanings. You will not give your pen full freedom in condemnation of what deserves to be completely condemned. What is the natural and inevitable result? Why, that either from principle or habit you never give it full freedom in the matter of praise, when the very highest praise may justly be given. In other words, you are a very Laodicean in criticism. One can, as I have said, discover by reading between the lines, when you think badly of a play, or its performance, or both; but it is very far from easy to discover when and to what extent you have felt moved towards an appreciation going much further than tolerant approval. In fact, as there is no scathing of denunciation to be got from you, so is there no enthusiasm of applause. You are not, as a critic, what you justly described Garrick as being, "a little calculating," but you certainly are uncommonly prudent and cautious. Your first judgment of anything new is never given with a heat of like or of dislike; but, notwithstanding the annoyance sometimes caused by what may be termed an excess of temperance in criticism, it is always a pleasure to read what you write, for the reason that it is full of that sense and of that command of style which incline your readers to forget their desire for greater warmth one way or the other in their contentment because they find themselves reposing on good English and on a disinterested if studiously suppressed judgment. I am told that fine qualities of style and taste are always to be found in the after-dinner speeches for which you are sometimes called upon. I can very well believe it, and I am sure from my own knowledge that there is no manager, actor, or playgoer of repute who does not feel for you the respect you have earned by a career which does you all credit.

L. ANON.

THE QUESTION OF A SUBSIDY.

BY J. F. NISBET.

EVERY now and again some enthusiast, writing on stage matters, expresses his regret at the non-existence in London of a subsidised theatre like the *Comédie Française* or the *Odéon*.

The reflection has become so trite that nobody pauses to examine it. Yet it is well worth a little passing consideration. At the first glance it looks as if nothing could be more desirable than that such a theatre as the Lyceum should receive an annual grant of public money from the State or the Municipality in order to cover the risks of a management which should keep literary and artistic, as well as pecuniary, ends in view. But the idea is never followed a step further. It is dropped with such a sigh as Thackeray heaved after sketching out the sort of maiden aunt he would like to have. "Fond, fond vision!" the enthusiasts seem to murmur, "foolish, foolish dream!" The latest aspiration towards a subsidised theatre comes from Sir Edward Russell, who, in last month's issue of *The Theatre*, observed: "If the affairs of the nation could be directed with full intelligence, one theatre at least, managed as the Lyceum is now managed, would be subsidised by the State." From the curious qualification introduced into this quoted passage, it may be that Sir Edward Russell does not believe in the practicability of the subsidy idea. But, if so, it is a pity that he should have the appearance of lending countenance to it. A moment's reflection ought to convince so expert a politician that the subsidy project is possible only under an autocracy and purely visionary under a parliamentary *régime* like our own, assuming, of course, that the principles of high art (a euphemism for unpopular art) are to be maintained. Perhaps it will be objected that the public, so far from condemning high art, like it, as the prosperity of our leading west-end theatres attests. Well, I am not a stickler for terms. Let the taste of the day be for high art, if you will. Only, from the fact of a subsidy being sought, it is clear that the art which it is proposed to promote is not the art which pays, not the art which the masses support; and that is good enough for my argument.

After this preliminary clearing of the ground, the shape your subsidy proposal takes is this: that you propose to apply popular money to unpopular purposes, to tax the many in order to minister to the tastes of the few. Sir Edward Russell has some practical experience of the working of our parliamentary institutions. How does he imagine such a proposal would look in the Budget? Could any Chancellor of the Exchequer be found bold enough or mad enough to put it forward? And if that miracle were realised, what about the attitude of a popularly elected legislative assembly pledged to economy from the public point of view? The concrete form of the proposal would be that a grant of public money, say £10,000 a year, should be made to Sir Henry Irving, or Mr. Tree, or Mr. George Alexander, or all three. If this sum were to be raised by general taxation (and as a State grant it would neces-

sarily be so), hundreds of thousands of taxpayers in the United Kingdom would exclaim with perfect reason that they never visited the Lyceum, Her Majesty's, or the St. James's, while a powerful minority might even declare that they were absolutely opposed to theatre-going in any shape. No tax could nowadays be levied upon the people which could not be shown to be for the popular benefit, and as regards the producing of a special and, above all, an unpopular form of drama, the question of a subsidy would be an extremely debatable one. That is surely the very mildest way of putting it. In an age when the disendowment of the Church of England is called for, the public endowment of that much narrower institution, the Theatre, does not assuredly come within the range of practical politics. That there is some analogy between a subventioned London theatre and the National Gallery I grant. But the works of art acquired by the State are a lasting property, and may even be considered a good investment; whereas the annual theatrical subsidy would be frittered away on ephemeral productions of questionable value.

So much for the question of the subsidy in its general aspect. I am convinced it will never in this democratic country get beyond the stage of an abstract proposition. France, too, it will be said, is a democratic country. It is true that within the memory of the present generation it has become so, but it was not so when the *Théâtre Français* and the *Odéon* first received their subventions, and if these houses were once disestablished there would be no chance of their being restored to their official position. Already murmurs are heard that they and other centralised institutions in Paris are being kept up by provincials for the benefit of Parisians and visitors to Paris, and unquestionably the republican principle is, in this matter, subjected to a certain strain. It is not true republicanism that a peasant of the Pyrenees should pay for the amusement of a tradesman of the Rue St. Honoré, or that, indeed, he should contribute any money, whether for national or local purposes, without having control over the expenditure of it. In our day, the principle of "no taxation without representation" is the watchword of all parties. No funds can be raised even for educational purposes except under popular control, and Sir Edward Russell himself would not class the drama higher than education.

A friend at my elbow remarks: "I quite agree with you. Anything like the *Théâtre Français*, a theatre managed by a non-actor as a State official, is impossible here. But it may be a question whether a sort of subsidy should not be given to our best actor-managers on the simple condition that they should produce so many great plays a year." Quite so! This line of

argument I know well. But who is to decide who are our best actor-managers, and which are the plays worthy of being produced at a loss? Why, the one authority in the case must be the public who provide the subsidy. Those who pay the piper call the tune. And this principle must hold good whether a theatre is subventioned by the State or by the local authority. What then becomes of Sir Edward Russell's ideal of a subsidised theatre, "managed as the Lyceum is now managed?" It is a contradiction in terms. The subsidised Lyceum would not, could not, be managed by Sir Henry Irving, as public education is managed, in his own way. It would be managed by a representative committee reflecting public opinion, and, moreover, public opinion as arrived at by the counting of heads—in other words, the opinion of the majority. Is this a consummation to be wished? It would only be by appealing to the majority that an entertainment policy could hope to carry the day at the polls. And what class of performance appeals to the majority? Not Shakspeare, not Ibsen, not Maeterlinck. No, nor Pinero; nor Henry Arthur Jones; nor Sydney Grundy. The majority records its vote nightly, and, beyond all question, its most admired artist is he who takes "the ten o'clock turn" in the music-halls. If the great heart of the people goes out to Mr. Albert Chevalier, Mr. Gus Elen, and the excellent Teetotum troupe, who shall say that they ought not to be subsidised? It is they, assuredly, or such as they, who would obtain the popular vote through which alone a donation of public money could be administered. Let us have done then, once for all, with the idea that a subsidised theatre is possible in this country, or that, if it were, it would be acceptable to those who advocate it. Their only chance of realising the object they have in view (as to the practical utility of which I say nothing) is to obtain a private bequest from a millionaire or a syndicate of art-loving stockbrokers. That ought to be feasible, surely.

NAPOLEON AND THE STAGE.

BY WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

IT is with considerable diffidence that, after having read Mr. Ormathwaite's comprehensive and finished article in *The Theatre* on the stage Napoleon, I venture to add a few lines as a kind of postscript, lines based upon material which I had thought I might use for the magazine until I found how very well my anticipator had pondered and expressed all that was of much

import to say. As this is but a modest postscript to an excellent piece of writing, I may be allowed, perhaps, to begin with a purely personal scrap of recollection, which is this. When what could be collected of the company of the House of Molière came for the first time to London, and played for some little time to empty benches, because their fame had not travelled before them, I, with the daring of the youth I then possessed, wrote to M. Got to point out alterations which I thought might be made with advantage in their very modest system of advertisement. M. Got replied that there were difficulties, that the company numbered only fifteen (which, of course, explained why the smallest parts were constantly filled by actors of the first rank), and ended by a reference to the decree written from Moscow as to the Français, and signed by the Emperor with his *griffe étrange*. Well, it is in all verity a *griffe étrange*, and it went through almost as many moods as did the Emperor himself, both before and after he was attacked by the deadly malady which brought that strange, glorious, and inglorious career to a close. The handwriting indicates the character of the man almost unerringly at every stage of his wonderful procession through life to that lonely death. The stage with which Sir Henry Irving is concerned is, at any rate for dramatic purposes, a stage of triumph following on unswerving perseverance. On the interpretation of the part it is not now my province to dwell; but as to the physical presentment of "the Little Corporal" we may say this. As on the stage, according to *The Critic*, when they agree their unanimity is wonderful, so when dramatic critics find a point where no disagreement is possible, why *their* unanimity is wonderful. And every one is agreed that Sir Henry Irving's "make-up" for Napoleon is startling in its success, and not least startling because of the complete simplicity of the means adopted. So long ago as his first appearance on a London stage as Claude Melnotte, Henry Irving, in the last scene of *The Lady of Lyons*, revealed a most curious facial resemblance to the best-known portraits of the young Bonaparte, the hero of Arcole. It was striking enough, and obviously not intended, and people who remembered it were amused when it was asked at large, before the production of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, "How on earth can Irving ever look like Napoleon?" There was no difficulty as to the face, and that as to the figure has been, as we all know, most adroitly overcome; and it is not impossible that our great actor might, if he pleased, carry the resemblance yet further by making a *griffe* at the end of a letter quite as *étrange* as any that Napoleon ever penned. As to former representatives of the

Emperor on the English stage, the name of Gomersal is still remembered, but remembered chiefly, perhaps, because he was immortalised in the *Bon Gaultier* ballads, first as Don Fernando Gomersalez à propos of nothing in particular except "Scenes in the Ring;" secondly, and to the present purpose, in *The Midnight Vision*. In this perfected piece of half-serious fooling, Lord Castlereagh is visited in his dreams by Napoleon, suddenly returned from St. Helena or from Elba. The Emperor, disappearing as suddenly as he appeared, leaves behind him a mysterious paper declaring, as he says, his new hiding place:

"With trembling hands, Lord Castlereagh undid the mystic scroll,
With glassy eye essayed to read, for fear was in his soul—
'What's here? At Astley's, every night, the play of *Moscow's Fall*!
Napoleon, for the thousandth time, by Mr. Gomersal!'"

The sketch of Gomersal appended to the verses is borrowed rather from the latest caricatures of the deposed Emperor than from any of the heroic portraits taken in his early days. Yet it is like enough to several not ill-natured sketches of the St. Helena Napoleon as to make it clear that Gomersal must have presented, in physical appearance, something better than a mere travesty of the Great Lost Man.

Another histrion, of a different class from Gomersal, who succeeded in giving a wondrous presentment on the stage of Napoleon "in his habit as he lived" was Webster; but, as it would seem, this was only such a metamorphosis of the moment as Charles Mathews (in *Patter v. Clatter*) used to accomplish without "trick-wigs" or darkened lights. Mr. Coleman tells the story in full in his chapter on Webster in "Plays and Playwrights"—and it is well worth reading in full, especially in connection with Webster's experiences in Paris. But briefly it is this. Webster was playing one of several military cadets who wanted to get "leave," and could not do so without the Emperor's personal intervention. The Webster-cadet, struck by a sudden inspiration, went up the stage, turning his back to the audience for a moment, and came down again the living image of the little corporal with some such speech as "How will this do?" The effect is said to have been astonishing.

As for Napoleon at the play, there is one truly delightful three-faced sketch of him in which you see him: 1—Falling asleep; 2—Waking up and looking round to see if his somnolence has been observed; 3—Recalling himself with a forced smile to contemplation of the stage and the actors. It is a small masterpiece, and was the work of Girodet. For his connection with the stage, I do not think Mr. Ormathwaite has quoted the song about Talma put into Napoleon's mouth at St. Helena. Each



SIR HENRY IRVING AS NAPOLEON.

[From a drawing by W. Brooke-Alder.]

verse ends with a regret that "Sans avoir décoré Talma"—I have done so-and-so, gained this victory and that. The last verse passes into the third person, and recounts how, after the Emperor's death, the inhabitants of the island heard "Une voix non plus humaine," wailing "Sans avoir décoré Talma, je suis mort à Sainte Hélène." And in this there is, perhaps, as much pathos as there is waggishness.

THE VICTORIAN DRAMA.

BY H. HAMILTON FYFE.

"I DON'T know," wrote Macaulay in one of the delightful letters to his sister Hannah in the year 1833, "I don't know that I ever mentioned Kenney to you. Kenney is a writer of a class which in our time is at the very bottom of the literary scale. He is a dramatist. Most of the farces and three-act plays which have succeeded during the last eight or ten years are, I am told, from his pen. Heaven knows that if they are the farces and plays which I have seen they do him little honour. However, this man is one of our great comic writers." To such a low position had our stage sunk just before the present reign began. We have not to rely merely upon Macaulay's estimate. Were it so, it might be thought that he judged by a standard something too high. But the testimony is universal. Take the memorists and chroniclers of the period. Save for a few chance and mostly contemptuous references by Greville and other writers, the theatre might not have existed at all. "A dramatist—a writer of a class at the very bottom of the literary scale." And yet, after all, it was more to the dishonour of the playgoing public than to that of Kenney and his fellow authors that such a definition could be fairly applied. Speaking further of him, Macaulay said, "He has the merit, such as it is, of hitting the very bad taste of our modern audiences better than any other person who has stooped to that degrading work. We had a good deal of literary chat, and I thought him a clever, shrewd fellow." Macaulay, in spite of Mr. S. R. Gardiner's opinion to the contrary expressed in his recent work on Cromwell, was not often mistaken in his judgments of men, and we may be pretty sure that this "clever, shrewd fellow" would have produced plays a good deal better than he actually did if there had been any market for them. He was no mere Grub-street hack, paid miserably to turn out so many acts a week from a Holborn garret. Henry Crabb Robinson in his diary records meeting him at one of Rogers's famous breakfast parties, and

gives him the high-sounding style of "Kenney, the dramatic poet." He was on terms of acquaintance with the notable literary men of his time, and had he devoted himself to any other form of composition he would very likely have survived in some of his works to this day, instead of merely being dimly remembered to have once fed a foolish public with the kind of garbage that was most to its taste.

Nor, indeed, had the condition of things appreciably improved, so far as the productions of British authors were concerned, when Matthew Arnold, early in the last decade, moved to enthusiasm by the performances of the Comédie Française in London, cried aloud for the organisation of our theatre upon the French model. "We in England," he wrote, "have no modern drama at all. Our vast society is not homogeneous enough for this, not sufficiently united, even any large portion of it, in a common view of life, a common ideal, capable of serving as a basis for it." He would have none of the many imitations from the French which for so long kept our playwrights' minds from developing any ideas of their own. They were not real, he said, and, of course, he was right. Here, curiously enough, M. Augustin Filon, the author of the essays which we have noticed from time to time as they appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and which have now been translated and bound up in a handsome volume bearing the title of *The English Stage*, is in entire agreement with Arnold. He seeks the reasons which retarded for so long the growth of an English drama. "It is we French," he declares, "who have hindered it;" and he goes on to express his absolute conviction that, except in regard to acting, French influence has been harmful to the English stage. This bold opinion is a fair example of the clear-headed and unprejudiced manner in which M. Filon's survey is made. Seldom do we find a native of another country taking so just a view and presenting so accurately the various phases through which our modern theatre has passed. M. Filon tells us that during his long residence in England he has been an enthusiastic playgoer, and certainly he has made good use of his opportunities. We know no better sketch of the vicissitudes which the London stage has weathered during the last sixty years (for since the extinction of the old "circuit system," of which an admirable idea is given in the book, London has been practically "England," so far as theatrical matters are concerned); and M. Filon has managed with great cleverness to get at the English point of view, being thus able to deal more sympathetically with some writers, and more hardly with others than he might have done had he tested them by a purely French standard. Of Robertson he writes at length, as of the principal dramatists of

to-day, Mr. Pinero, Mr. Grundy, and Mr. Jones ; and there is scarcely an author of any note in the whole period covered who does not receive some mention. The only case in which he has gone hopelessly wrong and failed to appreciate a class of piece that has won the suffrages of English audiences is in his brief and almost disdainful notice of the Savoy operas. Now, here are a series of pieces peculiarly and entirely English from start to finish, absolutely original, written with rare humour and style, and furnished with music that is a perpetual delight by the foremost of our native composers. Surely, one would have thought, an author who is endeavouring to show that the English drama is alive once more will seize upon the Gilbert and Sullivan productions as one of the clearest signs that he is in the right. But, no ; at the Savoy boredom has been M. Filon's lot ; he yawned, actually yawned, at *Patience* ; he gives solemnly a sketch of the plot of *The Pirates of Penzance* ; and he records the opinion that the " native comic opera is already out of fashion." Can M. Filon have been the legendary Frenchman who went to see the *Pirates*, and, on having the " policeman's lot " song roughly translated to him, exclaimed in horror, when the famous reference to the costermonger and his mother came round, "*Un homme qui marche sur sa mère ! Oh ! mon Dieu !*" and abruptly quitted the theatre ?

M. Filon's book serves, then, as a kind of milestone on the road of dramatic progress, whence we may look back for a moment and see how far we have advanced since the days of Kenney, how far since the early 'eighties, when Matthew Arnold wrote the lines quoted above, and declared that prominent among the fresh facts and signs that we had to deal with in entering upon the new period which he then saw beginning, was the " irresistibility of the theatre." "*There is an English drama,*" exclaims M. Filon ; slowly, laboriously, hesitatingly it makes its way, with halting steps ; with frequent relapses, frequent slackenings of effort ; confusedly, doubtfully, uncertainly, if you will, but " there the drama is ; it is alive, and it is growing. . . . Everyone is agreed that to-day is better than yesterday ; and almost everyone that to-morrow will be better than to-day." It is a bright and encouraging picture that M. Filon draws ; one fears almost too bright and too encouraging perhaps. He deals gently with the past (save where castigation is deserved, as, for instance, in the case of Bulwer Lytton's pinchbeck, pretentious works), and he bids us be of good hope for the future ; and for the interest and encouragement of this distinguished Frenchman all who care for the theatre must feel gratitude.

To turn for a moment from these roseate hues to the sombre colours in which Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's introduction paints the conditions imposed upon the dramatists of this age is rather a depressing experience. Fortunately, however, we know that Mr. Jones is given to rushing into extremes. Whenever he is not engaged in telling us that the greatest period of glory in English drama is just at hand, he is deploring the miserable blindness of the public to anything good that is offered it. With him it is always a choice between highest heaven and deepest hell. There is no middle course. Therefore no one need be either surprised or discomfited by his tirades against the "wax-doll morality" which, he contends, is stifling the modern, serious, "national" drama, and against the turn of fortune's wheel that has given the go-by for the moment to the problem play (the phrase, though ill-judged, is sometimes convenient) and raised to favour the inanities of musical farce. Let us not despair. Why should we despair in the face of a production such as *The Princess and the Butterfly*, a piece which "points us to a better time than ours," and shows what English comedy may be in the hands of a master of humour and humanity? Mr. Jones's gloomy forebodings and his appeal for a wider license in dealing with the great passions of men and women are more likely to provoke smiles than sympathy, as did the complaint of the child who could not manage his toy-boat and urged that he could do better if he had command of a frigate on the high seas. In spite of such pessimistic views, we will march boldly on "breast forward," and, cheered by the advances already made, slight though they may be, look forward to still more rapid progress in the work of creating a genuine national drama as a branch of English literature, and of raising the stage nearer to the estimation in which, in an ideal community, it ought to be held.

PROFESSOR MURRAY ON THE GREEK DRAMA.

BY H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

A PORTION, at least, of any adequate treatise on ancient Greek literature must possess interest for all lovers of the stage; and in Professor Murray's recently published volume on the subject the chapters given to the Greek drama are the work of a writer who evidently enjoys the theatre, and seems, indeed, to possess a practical knowledge of it. These chapters, written in

a great measure from a modern point of view, are wonderfully fresh and vivid. The Schlegels, in their well-known and undeniably valuable *History of Dramatic Literature*, ignore the moderns, and prove their inability to enter fully into the spirit of their subject by wholesale depreciation of Molière; whom a greater man than they, the immortal author of *Faust*, made a point of reading through once every year. It is certainly through a comparison of the Greek drama with the drama of the present day, that a reader of the present day can best be made to understand it. Let, then, the English playgoer, who might hesitate to study under the guidance of a Greek pedant a dry discourse on Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; let him but glance at only the first of the hundred pages or so devoted by Professor Murray to the Greek tragedians, and he will at once find himself on familiar terms with a writer who uses the word “*saga*” when, if he had never studied the drama of the Norwegians, he would probably have said “*epos*,” who refers constantly to Ibsen, and who conjures up thoughts of the modern French playwright by his employment of the term “*ficelles*.” Of these, according to Professor Murray, the Greek drama has two traditional ones—“oracles and the exposure of children;” while, as to its negative characteristics it exhibits “no sham heroism, no impossible villainy, no maudlin sentiment. There is singular boldness and variety of plot, and there is perfect freedom from those pairs of lovers who have been our tyrants since modern drama began.”

Difficult, indeed impossible, it would be in the present day to do without these lovers, whom Shakspeare, like the Greek dramatists, habitually left aside. When Bossuet reproved a priest of his diocese for writing a volume in favour of stage plays, saying that their unhappy aim was “to dispel that gloom which forms so large a part of human life,” but which can only be driven away by meditation and prayer, and that they dealt, moreover, with “the dangerous passion of love,” the innocent *curé* (who, himself, had never been to the theatre) replied that there were plays in which there was no question of love; to which the Eagle of Meaux, taking for once a playful flight, responded that they must be “exceedingly dull.” There is not much question of love in *Hamlet*; and none whatever in *Macbeth*. But these and many other of Shakspeare’s plays of which the same might be said had probably not reached, in Bossuet’s time the diocese of Meaux. Bossuet, however, could not have been ignorant of the Greek drama; and the timid priest who had audaciously ventured to praise the theatre might have made out a very good case for

himself in regard to the love question had he been invited to continue the controversy. In *Antigone* there is love-interest; since the lover of the ill-fated heroine refuses to survive her and slays himself in the tomb where she has been immured alive—much as Romeo slays himself for the love of Juliet in the tomb of the Capulets.

But if the love element was but small in the drama of the Greeks, they enjoyed it none the less when it was presented to them in a true love story; which is a different thing from a tragic incident caused by love. “The *Andromeda*,” writes Professor Murray, “was apparently the one simple, unclouded love story that Euripides wrote. It was very celebrated. Lucien has a pleasant story of the tragedy-fever which fell upon the people of Abdera: how they went about declaiming iambics, and especially sang the solos in the *Andromeda*, and went through the great speech of Perseus, one after another, till the city was full of seven-day-old tragedians, pale and haggard, crying aloud “O Love, high monarch over gods and men,” and so on. This reminds one of Stendhal’s description of the effect produced at Rome by the performance of Rossini’s *Tancredi*, when *Di tanti palpiti* was sung in every drawing-room, in every street, by the ushers in the law courts, the counsel, and even the judge on the bench.

If free from the conventional love stories, without which, in the present day, no tragedy or comedy, drama or farce would be considered complete, one group of alleged conventions—hitherto generally regarded as inseparable from the Greek drama—may be at once set aside. “We must, for the present, refuse to listen to those who talk to us of masks and buskins, and top-knots and sacerdotal dress, repeat to us the coarse half-knowledge of Pollux and Lucien, show us the grotesques of South Italy and the plasterers’ work of Pompeian degeneration, compile from them an incorrect account of the half-dead Hellenistic or Roman stage—the stage that competed with the amphitheatre—and bid us construct an idea of the dramas of Euripides out of the ghastly farrago. It is one of the immediate duties of archæological research to set us right again when archæological text-books have set us so miserably wrong.”

The elements of conventionalism which are generally found in the Greek drama, do not (apart from the chorus) belong to it exclusively. But though many countries have plays in which legendary personages figure, the characters in the Greek drama are all, as Professor Murray puts it, “saga people;” the best known exception to this almost invariable rule occurring in the case of a play bearing the sentimental title of the *Flower*,

the work of a once celebrated, now generally forgotten, dramatist named Agathon. This piece has apparently a plot and characters of its own, neither historical nor legendary. As to the other conventions mentioned by Professor Murray, they are of the nature of postulates, and are common to all poetical dramas. "The characters speak in verse; they tend to speak at equal length, and they almost never interrupt, except at the end of a line." But in the *Iphigénie* of Racine (to take one typical example) Agamemnon and Achilles abuse one another in the most violent terms, yet with such careful observance of literary propriety that each has ample time given him for finishing his speech, however long and however tiresome it may be. The dramatist who has written the speeches takes care, for his own sake, that they shall not be interrupted.

It is interesting to note the points of resemblance discovered by Professor Murray between certain fateful plots and predestined personages in the Greek drama, and plots and personages of like character in Ibsen's plays. But some readers, willing as they may be to admit the originality and the genius of Ibsen, will be a little startled to find him bracketed with Victor Hugo and Carlyle as one of the three great writers of the century. If Professor Murray goes on in this style, Miss Corelli will place him side by side with Mr. Archer and Ibsen himself in a new and specially enlarged list of her favourite aversions, as recently proclaimed in the pages of the *Lady's Realm*.

How difficult, by the way, it would be to determine by suffrage, even among the elect, the three superlatively great writers of our times? Heine compared Victor Hugo as poet to the devil of mediæval legend, "who, even in the most ecstatic moments, always remains cold." Charles Reade thought "Buffo Bombastes" an appropriate name for Carlyle; while Ibsen is looked upon by many writers, sound judges in regard to other matters, as a painter not of men as they should be, nor as they are, but of men as they would be if every man were obviously the victim of some hereditary disease. Not to be unjust, however, to Professor Murray, let us give, in his own words, the passage which has suggested the above remarks. "Those Titanic minds—Æschylus and Heraclitus among the Greeks, Victor Hugo and Ibsen and Carlyle among ourselves—are apt to be self-pleasing and weird in their humour."

Nothing in the way of criticism, nothing in the way of eulogium (not even the quoted saying of Philemon, "If I were certain that the dead had consciousness I would hang myself to

see Euripides'), can give such a high idea of the wisdom and beauty of the poetry of the Greek plays as Professor Murray's translations from them. Apart from several long and admirable passages, let these few lines (from Euripides) speak for themselves :

Love does not vex the man who begs his bread.
The things that must be are so strangely great.
Who knoweth if the quick be verily dead,
And our death life to them that once have passed it ?

It is interesting to note that one of the truest things ever said about human life—terribly true for many whom it directly concerns—is the utterance of a little-known Greek dramatist : "Character is destiny." The phrase in question is usually attributed to Lord Beaconsfield, who, in fact, gives it as his own in one of his novels.

THE VICTORIAN ERA EXHIBITION.

BY AN ONLOOKER.

IT is only right that a considerable section of the Victorian Era Exhibition should be set apart for an illustration of the progress made in the Drama during the last sixty years. That progress has been so marked as to engender thought in the minds of all students of the subject. Before 1837, when the Queen ascended the throne, the importance of the Stage, in spite of the unique gifts devoted to it for more than two centuries, was not adequately recognised. Macready, Phelps, Charles Kean, and others did splendid service in this way ; and within our own time, it is needless to say, the whole art of the theatre, whether as to acting, mounting, *ensemble*, or general beauty of effect, is very far in advance of what our grandfathers or great-grandfathers can recollect. On the whole, the Exhibition at Earl's Court, thanks in a large measure to the exertions and wide knowledge of the honorary secretary, Mr. Austin Brereton, is one of special value and interest. We have portraits, satires, scenes from plays, memorable programmes, autographs of distinguished writers and players, and, above all, most elaborate reproductions on a large scale of the *mise-en-scène* of latter-day productions and revivals. Conspicuous in the collection is Mr. Onslow Ford's bronze of Sir Henry Irving as Hamlet, one of the most perfect art works, in my judgment, of our time. One of the autographs (lent by Mr. Frederick Hawkins) is a sketch by Henry J. Byron, written for the convenience of a dramatic critic, of the story of *Our Boys*, a few days before the production of that astonishingly successful play.

Appended are the names of some of the things exhibited :—

- Portrait of Grimaldi, and playbill. Engraving ; lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water-colour and pencil-drawing portraits of Charles Kemble, 1805. 1840, and autographs. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Design by Queen Victoria for scene in Racine's *Athalie*. Engraving ; lent by E. H. Corbould, R.I.
- Proof engraving of Chas. Mathews, Liston, Blanchard, and Emery, in *Love, Law, and Physic*. Lent by Mrs. Blanchard.
- Engraving of Kemble as Don Felix. Lent by Rev. Hector de Courcelles, M.A.
- Coloured print of Grimaldi as the Bold Dragoon. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Three coloured engravings of Grimaldi. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- View of Richardson's Show. Print ; lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured print of Madame Vestris as Venus and Fatima. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Print of Paul Bedford as Jean Piednor, and two photographs of Bedford and Toole, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water colour of Mrs. Frank Mathews. Lent by Ben Webster, Esq.
- Coloured print of Grimaldi in *The Golden Fish*. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Original drawing, by Rowlandson, of Richardson's Show. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured print caricature, by Rowlandson, of *Comedy in the Country, Tragedy in London*. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Three engraved portraits of Prescilla Horton. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Portrait of Phelps, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water-colour of scene from *The Cricket on the Hearth*. Mrs. Keeley, Mr. Keeley, Miss Keeley. By Wilson, 1846 ; lent by Edward Nelson Haxell, Esq.
- Coloured print of Grimaldi as clown, and autograph letter. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Paul Pry. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured print, by Rowlandson, of Bartholomew Fair. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Two coloured prints, views of Richardson's Show. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water-colour portrait of O'Smith. By T. Harrington Wilson ; lent by Ben Webster, Esq.
- Two print portraits of Mrs. Honey, 1837. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Print portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Kean, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright.
- Lithograph of Chas. Kean, with autograph. Lent by Mrs. F. M. Paget.
- Engraved coloured portrait of Chas. Kean, with playbill of his first appearance as Norval, October 1, 1827. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Print of Fanny Cerrito as La Gitana. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Oil painting, The Forum scene from *Julius Cæsar*. By C. E. Robertson ; lent by Mr. J. H. Leigh.

- Water colour Vauxhall Gardens. By Rowlandson ; lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Two coloured engravings of Liston in character. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of J. P. Harley, with autograph. Inscription to Chas. Dickens ; lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Moll Flaggon. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Tristram. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured engraving of Vauxhall, 1751. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Engraving of Vauxhall Gardens, and ticket of admission, June 7, 1732. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Engraving of Macready, and three autographs. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water-colour portrait of Miss Reynolds. By Scanlon ; lent by Arthur Hood, Esq.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Sam Swipes. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Billy Lackaday, in *Sweethearts and Wives*. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured engraving of Vauxhall, 1753. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Engraving of Charles Kemble, after painting by G. H. Harlow. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Portrait of Macready, and engraving of testimonial. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Water-colour portrait of Wm. Blanchard, comedian (father of E. L. Blanchard), in character. Lent by Mrs. E. L. Blanchard.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Lubin Log. Lent by Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Van Dunder. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Engraving of Vauxhall Gardens, general view. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Portrait of Macready, and also caricature. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Paul Pry, &c. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Coloured caricature of Liston as Simon Pengander. Lent by Miss Sarah Thorne.
- Engraving of Mrs. Walter Lacy (Miss Taylor). Lent by Rev. H. de Courcelles, Esq., M.A.
- Coloured print of Newbury Theatre. Lent by John Llewellyn, Esq.
- Water-colour portrait of E. L. Blanchard, when a child. Lent by Mrs. E. L. Blanchard.
- Photograph of J. L. Toole, 1892. Lent by J. L. Toole, Esq.
- Portrait of Augustus Harris, senior. Lent by Lady Harris.
- Photograph of Oscar Barrett. By Walery ; lent by Oscar Barrett, Esq.
- Photographic group of *Diplomacy* at the Garrick Theatre.
- Mr. Edmund Maurice as Taffy in *Trilby*. Tinted photograph ; lent by Edmund Maurice, Esq.
- Photograph of G. R. Sims. Lent by Alfred Ellis, Esq.
- Portrait of the late John O'Connor, R.I. Photograph ; lent by Mrs. O'Connor.
- Photograph of Miss Annie Hughes as Little Lord Fauntleroy. Lent by Mrs. E. Maurice.

- Engraving of Frederick Lemaitre as Robert Macaire. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of Henry Russell, entertainer. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Proof engraving of Geo. Jones, as Hamlet. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured print of Taglioni, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured engraving of Macready as Romeo. By Woodman ; lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured engraving of Benjamin Webster. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured print of Charles Kean as Richard III. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Engraving of Douglas Jerrold. Lent by Mrs. Woodin.
- Water-colour drawing of Edward Wright as Paul Pry. Lent by T. Harrington Wilson, Esq.
- Crayon drawing of Miss Kate Santley, by Val Princep. Lent by Miss K. Santley.
- Portrait of Samuel Phelps. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of J. B. Buckstone, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Portrait of Webster. Oil painting ; lent by E. A. Lewis, Esq.
- Six portraits of Maria Taglioni. After A. E. Challon, R.A. ; lent by Charles Ellis, Esq.
- Coloured drawing of Macready as Lear. Lent by T. H. Wilson, Esq.
- Engraving of Madame Celeste as the Maid of Cashmere. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of Mrs. Keeley as Orange Moll, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Poker drawing of Wm. Macready. Lent by Edward Terry, Esq.
- Three portraits of Mrs. Keeley in character. Oil paintings. By Drumond, R.A. ; lent by T. R. Thomas, Esq.
- Helen Faucet (Lady Martin) as Antigone. Engraving after Sir F. Burton ; lent by Miss E. Bessle.
- Portrait of Edw. Fitzwilliam. Oil painting. By J. P. Knight ; lent by Walter Withall, Esq.
- Water-colour drawing of F. Robson. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Two coloured portraits of Madame Vestris. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of Webster, and autograph letter of Charles Dickens. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Engraving of Miss Foote as Maria Darlington in *A Roland for an Oliver*. Lent by Miss Clara Lee.
- Coloured Portrait of W. H. West Betty, "The Young Roseius," and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Portrait, Madame Rachel, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of T. P. Cooke, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Coloured portrait of Jenny Lind, and autograph. Lent by Wm. Wright, Esq.
- Charles Dillon as Macbeth. Oil painting ; lent by J. Hudson, Esq.

Portraits.

MR. CHARLES HAWTREY.

WHEN Mr. Arthur Bouchier not long ago revived Foote's old comedy *The Liar*, many inquiries were raised as to why Mr. Hawtrey had not anticipated him. "The most accomplished liar on the stage" has long been the latter comedian's label; but indeed his is not precisely the same order of untruthfulness as that of Foote's hero. Young Wilding lies for no particular reason, but simply because he feels inclined to. With him it is a case of "art for art's sake," while the characters which Mr. Hawtrey plays with such complete success are made to lie by force of circumstances. Unkind people said that young Wilding reproduced the chief characteristic of his creator, and Dr. Johnson declared that Foote "was quite impartial, for he told lies of everybody." Such an imputation, however, cannot be fairly laid upon Mr. Arthur Hummingtop, the Hon. Stacey Gillam, or the pseudo-captain of the "Saucy Sally." They are driven to depart from truth by the scrapes in which they find themselves; and it is in calm, convincing mendacity of the kind required to get a scapegrace out of a difficult position that Mr. Hawtrey excels. Ever since he made so striking a success at the Globe in 1883 with his own version of the German piece which was christened *The Private Secretary*, this actor has been constantly and prominently before the public, with the result that he now holds a leading position among the most popular comedians of the day. During these fourteen years he has appeared in any number of farces, mostly produced under his own management, and in a few pieces of more serious interest, including *Harvest* and *An Ideal Husband*, in which he played with excellent effect a part outside his usual line. Son of a master at Eton (where, however, he was not educated, his school being Rugby), and a grandson of the famous headmaster and provost, Mr. Hawtrey was in the first flight of the amateurs who in the early eighties passed from society to the professional stage. In his case (unlike that of many others) the step has been amply justified. He has added considerably to the gaiety of the present generation of playgoers, and the wonderful finish and naturalness of his acting have gained him a large following, including even many who would be glad to see him rather more often in characters offering some scope to the talents he has shown himself to possess for a more extended range of parts.

"THE THEATRE," JUNE, 1897.



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MR. CHARLES HAWTREY.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE past month has been remarkable for the number, not only of new productions, but also of interesting revivals. After an absence of two years, Mr. John Hare appeared on May 15th, at the Court Theatre, in Mr. Pinero's amusing comedy, *The Hobby-Horse*; at the Lyric, Mr. Wilson Barrett has been seen in his splendid impersonation of Virginius; *The Yeomen of the Guard* has been successfully revived at the Savoy; while Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have been delighting Islington playgoers with Mr. Herman Merivale's twenty-year-old drama, *All for Her*, at the Grand. In addition, we have had a series of afternoon performances, at the Globe, of *A Doll's House* and *A Wild Duck*, under the auspices of the Independent Theatre Society, and several Shaksperian revivals, at the New Olympic, by Mr. Ben Greet's provincial company.

THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.

A Play, in a Prologue and Three Acts, by GILBERT PARKER. Produced at Her Majesty's Theatre April 28.

Louis XV. . . . .	.. Mr. CHARLES BROOKFIELD	Lieut. Ferney . . . .	.. Mr. GERALD DU MATRIER
Tinoir Doltaire . .	.. .. Mr. TREE	The Marquise de Pompadour	
Captain Moray . . .	.. Mr. LEWIS WALLER		Miss JANETTE STEER
M. François Bigot .	.. Mr. MURRAY CARSON	Madame Cournal . . .	.. Mrs. TREE
Sergeant Gabord . .	.. Mr. LIONEL BROUOH	Mathilde . . . . .	.. Miss EDITH OSTLERE
Voban . . . . .	.. Mr. WILLIAM MOLLISON	Mother St. Anne . .	.. Miss LAURA GRAVES
The Seigneur Duvarney	.. Mr. CHARLES ALLAN	Mdlle. Alixe Duvarney	.. Miss KATE RORKE
M. Vendome . . . .	.. Mr. HENRY ARNCLIFFE		

Her Majesty's is a theatre of which Mr. Tree and the entire playgoing public may justly be proud. Spacious, comfortable, and imposing, it possesses also the inestimable advantage of affording every member of the audience an uninterrupted view of the stage. The building itself is substantially constructed of Portland stone in the French Renaissance style. Within, it contains only two galleries, the ground floor being devoted to pit, pit-stalls, and stalls, the first floor to dress and family circle, and the second to upper circle, amphitheatre, and gallery. The decorations are in the fashion of Louis XIV., the hangings being of cerise-coloured embroidered silk, and the walls, generally speaking, covered with paper of the same tone. Three curtains are used—a hydraulic fire-resisting one, another painted in

imitation of one of the Gobelin tapestries in Paris, and, finally, tableau curtains of rich velvet. The theatre is well supplied with comfortable foyers, and there is an open-air smoking terrace, from which a view of the Haymarket can be obtained. Electric light is employed throughout, the apparatus employed being one of the most complete to be found in Europe. The building has a holding capacity of about 1,700 persons, representing a money value of nearly £370. It is designed by Mr. C. J. Phipps, F.S.A.

The inaugural ceremony, at which the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Teck, and many other well-known playgoers assisted, included the recitation by Mrs. Tree of a graceful ode written by the Poet Laureate, and the singing by Miss Clara Butt and a trained choir of the National Anthem. Following this came the first performance in London of *The Seats of the Mighty*, the drama which Mr. Gilbert Parker has fashioned out of his own romance bearing the same name. Unhappily, in doing so Mr. Parker has clearly shown that, well-deserved as his success as a novelist may be, he has still much to learn as a playwright. *The Seats of the Mighty*, to be frank, is a poor piece, stuffed with conventional tricks and crude melodramatic devices. The characters are barely more than outlined, save in the case of Doltaire, who, although he has much to say and do in the play, proves after all to be but an unimpressive figure. Upon the part the author assuredly has lavished the greatest pains, without, however, obtaining any marked result. For, although Doltaire is continually spoken of by others as a marvellously clever and brilliant man, his actions and his speech betray him to be rather a somewhat blundering conspirator and singularly foolish person. It is he who, at the command of the Marquise de Pompadour, proceeds to Quebec at the moment when the city is besieged by Wolfe, in order to secure certain incriminating papers which have fallen into the hands of Captain Moray, a British officer who has been made prisoner by the French. The position is complicated by the fact that Doltaire has fallen in love with Alixe Duvarney, Moray's sweetheart. In the end Moray escapes to return subsequently in company with the victorious English to claim his bride. Doltaire, meanwhile, meets his fate in a room in the Governor's palace, which has been undermined by a wild fanatic, Voban. In the explosion, exceedingly well managed, the two perish miserably. All this, as may be judged, is merely melodrama, and melodrama not of the best kind. Nor can it be said that Mr. Tree is seen at his best in the part of Doltaire, whose declamatory outbursts are a little foreign to the actor's style. The most satisfactory acting of the evening came from Miss Kate Rorke, Mr. Lewis Waller,

Mr. Murray Carson, Mr. Lionel Brough, and Mr. William Mollison, while Mrs. Tree, although a trifle overweighted by the part, gave a forcible portrait of Madame Cournal.

Ten days later—that is, on Saturday, May 8—Mr. Tree lengthened, if he did not strengthen, his programme by the addition of a new wordless play named '*Chand d'Habits*; or, *The Old Clo' Man*, by M. Catulle Mendès, with music by M. Jules Bouval. The plot of the piece is particularly gruesome, and most of the effects are of the order of Christmas pantomime. Pierrot, tired of life, hangs himself from a lamppost, but is cut down in the nick of time by a courtesan named Musidora, with whom he falls in love. In order to obtain the means to accompany her to a fancy dress ball, he murders an old Jew, who ever afterwards haunts him, and who, finally, by force of will, compels the conscience-stricken assassin to impale himself on the sword with which he accomplished the death of the other. In producing so grim and unattractive a piece, Mr. Tree has made a distinct mistake, which it is to be hoped he will hasten to remedy. The cast included M. Severin, who, although a clever artist, hardly justified the description given him on the programme of "the great poetical mime," Madame Zanfretta, excellent as Musidora, and Mr. Charles Lauri.

SECRET SERVICE.

A Drama, in Four Acts, by WILLIAM GILLETTE. Produced at the Adelphi Theatre, May 15.

Brigadier-General Nelson Randolph	Mr. JOSEPH BRENNAN	Henry Dumont	Mr. M. L. ALSOP
Mrs. General Varney	Miss IDA WATERMAN	Mr. Benton Arrelsford	Mr. CAMPBELL GOLLAN
Edith Varney	Miss BLANCHE WALSH	Miss Kittridge	Miss ETHEL BARRYMORE
Wilfred Varney	Mr. HENRY WOODRUFF	Martha	Miss ALICE LEIGH
Caroline Mitford .. ..	.. Miss ODETTE TYLER	Jonas	Mr. H. D. JAMES
Lewis Dumont	Mr. WILLIAM GILLETTE	Lieut. Foray	Mr. W. B. SMITH

There need be no hesitation in declaring that *Secret Service* is the best play of its kind which America has yet sent us. We might indeed go further and assert without fear of contradiction that it would be impossible to name any piece produced of recent years on the London stage in which rapidity of movement, dramatic intensity, and sustained interest of story are so conspicuous. In one respect, and one only, we hold, as we shall presently show, that the author, Mr. William Gillette, has fallen beneath the level of his subject. That he has done this purposely with the view of gratifying the popular taste for a happy ending does not, in our opinion, afford a valid justification of the step. But apart from this we have only the highest praise for *Secret Service*, in which skilful construction, strenuous writing, and coherent action combine to make a play of great and distinct merit. American dramatists are fortunate in possessing in the

Civil War of 1861-5 ample material ready to their hands for turning to stage purposes, and in this instance Mr. Gillette has made excellent use of his opportunities. His story opens in the drawing-room of General Varney's house in Richmond, Virginia, at a moment when that city is closely besieged by the Northern army. A certain Lewis Dumont, in the United States Secret Service, has contrived to make his way into the town and to secure the confidence of the Southerners, the Varneys among others, under the name of Captain Thorne. Nothing, however, can alleviate the fact that the man is a spy, his object to betray the people who have given him their confidence. Something more than confidence the General's daughter Edith has yielded him, for it is speedily evident that the two love each other passionately. Suspicion, meanwhile, has awakened in the mind of one Benton Arrelsford, himself a disappointed suitor for Edith's hand, and this suspicion is strengthened by the discovery that an attempt has been made to communicate with Captain Thorne through the medium of a prisoner named Henry Dumont. Having a shrewd idea that Thorne is really Lewis Dumont, Arrelsford contrives to bring the brothers together, while from behind a curtain he and the Varneys watch the result. Conscious of their danger, the Northerners afford no clue to their identity. But recognising that mere silence will not convince the enemy, Henry seizes his brother's revolver, fires upon himself, and when the others rush in it is to find Captain Thorne standing pistol in hand over the dead body of the spy whom he declares he has shot.

A more thrillingly poignant situation it would be hard to conceive. Edith's confidence in her lover is thus restored, although Arrelsford still remains unsatisfied. Through the girl's agency Captain Thorne secures the post he covets, that of operator in the Military Telegraph Department. The circumstance places him in a position, by sending over the wires a false message, to withdraw the Southern forces at a certain point, and so ensure an easy entrance into the city for his own side. He little suspects, however, that in this crisis he is watched by Edith and Arrelsford, who are in this way afforded emphatic proof of his guilt. With considerable ingenuity Dumont succeeds at first in turning the tables upon his accuser, but eventually so damning is the evidence that no hope remains for him save in an assertion from Edith that she knows him to be innocent. Incredible as it may appear, the girl, a thorough Southerner by birth and training, full of the prejudices and the hatred born of the war, and conscious that the man before her is a spy and miserable creature, proceeds to declare this. Which of the two is the more to be despised one hesitates to say, but that all sympathy for both is at once

dissipated few will deny. Nor does it help matters greatly that in the last act Dumont refuses a chance of escape from death unless Edith will consent to forgive him. As a matter of fact the author is more complaisant than his heroine, and the curtain falls on the certainty that when the war is over the spy and his fair mistress will be permitted to enjoy a long and happy life together. Personally, we do not envy them the prospect. Only death could have redeemed the reputation of such a man as Dumont, and it is a pity the author had not the courage to face the one legitimate conclusion to his piece. To the performance unqualified praise can be given. Since the best days of Daly's company acting so spontaneous and so admirable has not been witnessed. Unfortunately, considerations of space prevent us from doing more than mention the forcible and dignified performance of Mr. Gillette himself, the exquisite comedy of Miss Odette Tyler, the fresh boyishness of Mr. Henry Woodruff, the tender pathos of Miss Ida Waterman, and the excellent acting of Mr. Campbell Gollan. Indeed, down to the merest "super," every character was played with sufficient skill.

JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN.

A Play, in Four Acts, by HENRIK IBSEN, translated by WILLIAM ARCHER. Produced at the Strand Theatre, May 3.

John Gabriel Borkman	Mr. W. H. VERNON	Mrs. Wilton ..	Mrs. BEERBOHM TREE
Mrs. Borkman ..	Miss GENEVIEVE WARD	Vilhelm Foldal ..	.. Mr. JAMES WELCH
Erhart Borkman ..	Mr. MARTIN HARVEY	Frida Foldal ..	.. Miss DORA BARTON
Ella Rentheim ..	Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS	Maid ..	Miss MARIANNE CALDWELL

John Gabriel Borkman, the latest of Ibsen's plays, possesses all the characteristics of its author's work. It is dull, tedious, depressing, at times even ludicrous. The writer's views of life remain unchanged. The lightness and sweetness to be found in the world he persistently ignores; towards what is mean and ignoble he is drawn as inevitably as the needle to the pole. Now, the true dramatist is ever the first to recognise that the very essence of a play is contrast, that no picture can really offer a fair presentment of nature unless light and shade figure in it. This fact Ibsen seems determined altogether to disregard. His vocabulary begins and ends with the word "pessimism." The people he treats of are all touched with the same brush; they move in an atmosphere of moral degradation; their motives are selfish, their impulses evil. Of the eight characters who appear in *John Gabriel Borkman*, there is only one who has the slightest title to our sympathy, and even he is such a poor, weak fool that pity is changed into contempt. Censure, however, does not stop here. Judged merely from the standpoint of dramatic workman-

ship, Ibsen's last play is but an indifferent affair. The first two acts are almost entirely retrospective, and when at length the action begins to progress its development is diverted from the direct line and becomes complicated with uninteresting and puerile details. In *Borkman* the author has imagined a character that, adequately handled, might have formed the pivot of a great drama. Unfortunately, he has missed the opportunity thus created by himself, and, in place of a powerful, commanding figure, he gives us a querulous, impotent misanthrope, who poses with the exaggerated affectations of a Mantalini and utters the mock heroics of a Digby Grand.

Only a brief outline of the story can be given here. *Borkman*, some thirteen years before the rising of the curtain, had been convicted of fraud in connection with the bank of which he was manager, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Set free again, he had sought the seclusion of his own room, where, unvisited save by an old clerk and his daughter, he had spent his life pacing up and down the gallery like a "sick wolf," while in the chamber below sat his grim, unforgiving wife, her ambition centred in the son who was some day to remove from the name of *Borkman* the stigma placed upon it by his father. In all this one discerns the elements of a gruesome tragedy. *Erhart Borkman*, however, is young; he willingly allows himself to be tempted away from the mother, who regards him as the possible regenerator of their fallen house, from the aunt who, after her purely selfish fashion, loves the youth, and from the father, who entreats his son to throw in his lot with his—by a butterfly creature of no morals named *Fanny Wilton*. The scene in which all this is effected might have been lifted bodily from some irresponsible farcical comedy, so far removed is it from anything like truth or reality. Eventually, *John Gabriel* ventures out into the snow on a bitterly cold night, accompanied by *Ella Rentheim*, his wife's sister, whom, quite in the Ibsenite fashion, he loves, if such a monster of selfishness could be said to love; and, having apostrophised, in inflated language, the earth and all that in it is, quietly dies, his wife and sister-in-law amicably joining hands over the dead body. Slight as this sketch of the plot may be, it will perhaps suffice to show how gloomy and unattractive a play *John Gabriel Borkman* is, and how entirely out of touch with the progressive tendencies of the modern drama Ibsen still remains. That there are one or two powerful scenes to be discovered in his play we readily admit, but that as a whole it is either an artistic masterpiece or a convincing specimen of realistic endeavour we as strenuously deny. Nor is it possible to speak in unreserved

terms of praise of the performance. In the title-part Mr. W. H. Vernon acted soundly and solidly, but his rendering revealed a notable lack of imaginative insight. Miss Genéviève Ward played Mrs. Borkman on the conventional lines of the bereaved mother, although in certain passages she successfully contrived to rise superior to that vein. Miss Elizabeth Robins as Ella showed her accustomed intelligence, albeit the monotony of her delivery became at times positively painful. Mrs. Tree and Mr. Martin Harvey obviously failed to realise the true significance of their respective parts, and only from Mr. James Welch as old Foldal was a fully satisfying performance forthcoming. Five matinées would appear to have exhausted the drawing powers of the piece.

A COURT OF HONOUR.

A Play of Modern Life, in Four Acts, by JOHN LART and CHARLES DICKINSON. Produced at the
Royalty Theatre, May 18.

Captain Neville Norway, V.C.	Mr. FRED TERRY	Algie Leigh	Mr. PATRICK EVANS
Kenrick Fector ..	Mr. W. L. ABINGDON	Cora Favarger ..	Miss ELEANOR CALHOUN
Lord Beldon	Mr. CHARLES FULTON	Lady Meryon.. ..	Miss ALICE DE WINTON
Doctor Ashby.. ..	Mr. FRED GROVE	Violet Leigh	Miss NINA BOUCAULT
Hon. Tom D'Arcy	Mr. E. H. KELLY	Mrs. Carlisle	Miss MARION BISHOP

Messrs. John Lart and Charles Dickinson's ideas of what constitutes "modern life" must differ strangely from those held by ordinary persons if they imagine that *A Court of Honour* affords a fair representation of everyday existence. A play more frankly artificial we have seldom met with. The characters, from the highest to the lowest, are simply stage puppets, and the language they indulge in rhetorical bombast of the most aggravated kind. Rational creatures they are not, their actions being governed, not by human thought or impulse, but merely by the author's will. Powerful as are some situations in the piece, their effect, consequently, is almost wholly nullified. The plot starts with a hypothesis which it is difficult to accept. Kenrick Fector, a confirmed drunkard, is on the point of being married to a Miss Cora Favarger, who, however, is at no pains to conceal that the love of money, and that alone, has inspired her to the step. At this juncture Captain Neville Norway turns up, after a five years' absence in India, only to find that Cora is his wife, or rather would have been his wife but for the fact that the lady possessing the first claim to that title, in place of dying, as Norway believed, had had the temerity to remain alive. Apprised of this circumstance, Cora leaves his house without pausing to ask for explanations, and, her heart turned to stone, determines to avenge herself on men generally for the future. As it happens, Norway and Fector have been staunch friends from boyhood, yet

Norway, with incredible disloyalty, allows the marriage between Fector and Cora to take place. The result is what might have been expected. Fector goes unconditionally to the bad, while Cora and Norway, still loving each other passionately, are equally unhappy. Luckily, a paralytic stroke arrives in the last act, as a special kind of providence, to remove Fector from a world which he neither adorns nor enjoys. The piece, as we have said, has its strong moments, but is altogether too unreal and stagey to produce the effect intended by the authors. Doubtless the influence of the stilted dialogue was felt by the performers, who, while playing with unbounded energy, never at any moment succeeded in really touching the hearts of their audience. The whole performance can indeed only be described as mechanical and forced.

DOCTOR JOHNSON.

An Episode, in One Act, by LEO TREVOR. Produced at the Strand Theatre, April 23.

Samuel Johnson, LL.D. Mr. ARTHUR BOURCHIER	Capt. Alan McKenzie	.. Mr. CHARLES WEIR
James Boswell Mr. FRED THORNE	Mrs. Boswell	Miss SIDNEY CROWE

This is a really clever little piece, dealing with a supposititious incident in the life of the great lexicographer, who is presumed, by intervening at the right moment, to save his friend Boswell's wife from committing the folly of eloping with a gallant young captain of the Royal Foot. There are no grounds, of course, for believing that Mrs. Boswell ever dreamed of doing anything of the kind, but historical accuracy may in this instance be allowed to yield place to dramatic necessity. Mr. Arthur Bouchier, both in appearance and manner, gave a very good impression of the harassed Doctor, although a little too apt, perhaps, to lay stress on his uncouth and gluttonous ways. Bozzy had an able representative in Mr. Fred Thorne, while Mrs. Boswell was played with rare simplicity and charm by Miss Sidney Crowe.

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED.

Musical Farce, in Three Acts. Written by J. CHEEVER GOODWIN, music by WOOLSON MORSE. Produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, April 27.

Bidart	Mr. FRANK WHEELER	Pacheco	Mr. ARTHUR STYAN
Chaconne	Mr. J. H. BARNES	Honorine	Miss ETHEL SYDNEY
Roquefort	Mr. ROBB HARWOOD	Catherine	Miss ELSIE CROSS
Godard	Mr. H. DE LANGE	Julie	Miss NINA MARTINO
Gaston	Mr. ARTHUR APPLEBY	Rose d'Été	Miss DECIMA MOORE

When it is stated that a baby is the article "lost, stolen, or strayed," the reader will have little difficulty in realising to what particular category Mr. Cheever Goodwin's farce belongs. A careless nursemaid entrusts the child to a passing soldier, and

thereupon the distracted father, accompanied by the infant's three prospective godfathers, starts in pursuit. *La chasse à bébé* leads them into strange quarters and even stranger plights. Barracks are overhauled, boudoirs ransacked, public gardens invaded, in the hope of discovering the missing property, which in the end is restored to its mother's arms in the most natural manner possible. The drawback to this description of piece is that the interest must inevitably be of a changeable and fragmentary character, and that the spectator is apt speedily to tire of this constant game of hide-and-seek. In *Lost, Stolen, or Strayed* some of the incidents are fairly amusing in themselves, but as the most diverting are separated by intervals of dulness the farce can hardly claim to be a success. Mr. Goodwin's dialogue is of the baldest, and leaves the impression that if he is really possessed of any humorous powers he has taken infinite pains to conceal all trace of the fact. Nor is Mr. Woolson Morse's music conspicuous for great brightness or originality. The best that can be said of it is that it fairly well serves the humble purpose for which it was designed. As Bidart, the father of the child, Mr. Frank Wheeler worked with unflagging energy in a part that offered meagre opportunities for effect; the three godfathers were amusingly portrayed by Mr. J. H. Barnes (who has since left the cast), Mr. Robb Harwood, and Mr. H. De Lange; while a very creditable first appearance was made by Mr. Arthur Appleby, who, when he can act as well as he sings, should prove a valuable recruit to the lyric stage. An exceptionally good sketch of a jealous Cuban was furnished by Mr. Arthur Styant, and Miss Decima Moore, not quite at her ease, and Miss Ethel Sydney represented the ladies. The farce is handsomely mounted, and may possibly win favour by virtue of its boisterously diverting incidents and lively acting.

SOLOMON'S TWINS.

Farceical Comedy, in Three Acts, by F. KINSEY PEILE. Produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, May 11.

Ralph Osborne ..	Mr. GEORGE GIDDENS	Mrs. Pegmona Sweeting	Miss GLADYS HOMFREY
Solomon Sweeting ..	.. Mr. JAMES WELCH	Mrs. Lawledge ..	Mrs. EDMUND PHELPS
Major Lawledge ..	Mr. CHARLES COLLETTE	Nora Lawledge ..	Miss PHYLLIS BROUGHTON
Mr. Pilkington ..	Mr. WILLIAM BLAKELEY	Miss Primrose ..	Miss CHARLOTTE MORLAND
Mr. Honeybun ..	.. Mr. WILLIAM WYES	Nurse Edith ..	.. Miss SYBIL GREY
Rudolph ..	.. Mr. AUBREY FITZGERALD	Eliza ..	.. Miss ALICE BEET

Solomon's Twins is a farce of the old-fashioned kind, which depends for success more upon bustle and noise than upon ingenuity of story or witty dialogue. The author starts with the wholly preposterous idea that a gentleman dies bequeathing his fortune to his sister on the condition that she shall not present her husband with male twins. This is silly enough, but it is not

a whit more foolish than what remains behind. Of course, Mrs. Solomon Sweeting does precisely what she is desired not to do, and, with the view of retaining the property, despatches her offspring to a baby-farm at Mudend-on-Sea. Adjoining it is a boarding-house, in the common room of which the action of the piece is laid. There Ralph Osborne, nephew and heir in reversion to the fortune, has taken up his quarters. Disguising himself as a French Countess, he succeeds, by the easy method of listening at doors, in surprising the Sweetings' secret. This, practically, is the essence of Mr. Peile's plot, which is eked out to the necessary length by one or two side love-issues of no great consequence. But if the intrigue reveals on the author's part no great measure of ability, he is certainly more happy in his characterisation. The humours of the dingy sea-side boarding house, if a trifle too boisterous, are effectively shown through the medium of such personages as the hypochondriacal Mr. Pilkington, accompanied by his pretty nurse Edith; the timorous Mr. Honeybun, engaged to the highly proper spinster, Miss Primrose; the braggart Major Lawledge, a compound of Eccles and of Mr. Mantalini; and his down-trodden little wife, the sole support of the establishment. An excellent study of a sluttish maid-servant is also provided in Eliza, the dirty, unkempt "slavey" of the place, a character realised with extraordinary cleverness by Miss Alice Beet. Of the performers it is sufficient to say that in no instance could they have been improved on, and had the success of the farce depended alone upon their efforts, a favourable verdict would indubitably have been returned. If, therefore, the piece is destined not to be seen again the responsibility must be laid entirely on the author's shoulders.

THE FRENCH MAID.

Musical Comedy, in Two Acts. Written by BASIL HOOD, music by WALTER SLAUGHTER. Produced at Terry's Theatre, April 24.

Admiral Sir Hercules Hawser, K.C.B.	Jack Brown	Mr. JOSEPH WILSON
Mr. H. O. CLAREY	Paul Lecuire	Mr. HERBERT STANDING
General Sir Drummond Fife, V.C., K.C.B.	Monsieur Camembert	Mr. ERIC LEWIS
Mr. WINDHAM GUISE	Dorothy Travers	Miss LOUIE POUNDS
Lieutenant Harry Fife, R.N.	Lady Hawser	Miss KATE TALBY
Mr. RICHARD GREEN	Violet Travers	Miss HILDA JEFFREYS
The Maharajah of Punkapore	Madame Camembert	Miss LILLIE POUNDS
Mr. PERCY PERCIVAL	Suzette	Miss KATE CUTLER
Charles Brown	Mr. MURRAY KING	

In its unpretentious way *The French Maid* is really a capital entertainment. Mr. Basil Hood's dialogue is not overwhelmingly witty, nor his story absorbingly interesting. But from first to last the piece goes with such a swing, the performance reveals so much that is bright and stimulating, that it is impossible to resist the feeling of exhilaration produced. The first act, moreover,

offers something more than the usual mere suggestion of a plot, while by the time the second is reached the senses of the audience have been sufficiently tickled to render them indifferent to its disappearance. The principal personage in the piece is a bright little French chambermaid, represented with the greatest vivacity and charm by Miss Kate Cutler, who, becoming jealous of her lover, Paul Lecuire, a gendarme, proceeds to set her cap at anybody who may seem disposed to accept it. Meanwhile Paul, disguised as an English lord, neglects his sweetheart in order to shadow two ladies whom he suspects of being spies. Hence many tears. One of those ladies is beloved by young Harry Fife, a lieutenant in Her Majesty's navy, but, thinking he has transferred his attentions to the French maid, she seeks consolation elsewhere. Wherefore, more tears. Into the intricacies of the plot it would be useless, however, to enter further. The attractiveness of the piece lies less in the presence of a coherent story than in the liveliness of the acting, the charms of pretty dresses and graceful dancing, and in the tuneful music supplied by Mr. Walter Slaughter. To the success of the comedy Mr. Richard Green, by his refined vocalisation, Mr. Joseph Wilson, by his exceedingly clever portrait of a bluff, jovial sailor, and Mr. Herbert Standing, by his droll sketch of the gendarme, Paul, contributed in no small degree. In point of fact, the greatest praise is due to the entire company for their untiring efforts and excellent acting.

AN AMATEUR WIFE.

Farical Comedy, in Three Acts, by Mrs. LANCASTER WALLIS. Produced at the Criterion Theatre, April 27.

Benjamin Barker ..	Mr. SIDNEY HARCOURT	Mr. Potton ..	..	..	Mr. FRED EPITAUX
Mons. Castelle ..	..	Mr. ATHOL FORDE	Stevens ..	..	..
Captain Giffy ..	..	Mr. W. GRANVILLE BLAKE	Binny ..	..	..
Hon. Percy Pranks ..	..	Mr. F. NEWTON LINDO	Miss Halliday ..	..	..
Tom Heavysides ..	..	Mr. FEWLESS LLEWELLYN	Mrs. Binny ..	..	Miss HENRIETTA COWEN
Lieut. Chas. Younghusband	Mr. ARNOLD LUCY	Miss Smythe ..	..	..	Miss CICELY RICHARDS

It is strange that an actress having the stage experience possessed by Mrs. Lancaster Wallis should for an instant have supposed that so crude and feeble a piece of work as *An Amateur Wife* could possibly be accepted by the playgoing public. Stranger still that no friend was found to convince her of the mistake she was making in offering it to the judgment even of one of the most indulgent audiences. *An Amateur Wife*, in truth, bears the mark of the amateur, not alone on its title, but all over it. A certain Mr. Benjamin Barker, eager for histrionic fame, determines to appear as Othello, and with that object surrounds himself with a company composed partly of amateurs and partly of professionals. His wife, although supposed to be a prudish martinet, is in reality as anxious as her

husband to figure on the boards, and consequently answers, under an assumed name, the advertisement inserted by her husband's agent for a lady willing to play Emilia. Mr. Barker, greatly alarmed at the unexpected appearance of his spouse, contrives, by blacking his face and striding about on stilts, so to disguise himself that his wife fails to recognise, and eventually falls in love with, him. Mutual explanations bring about a better understanding between the two, who resolve for the future to show greater confidence in each other. The piece is padded out with the conventional humours of a party of amateurs rehearsing *Othello*. Poor as the farce was, the acting was little better, although, perhaps, it is hardly fair to blame the performers for failing to make bricks when deprived of the necessary straw.

MR. SYMPKYN.

Farce, in Three Acts, by A. J. FLAXMAN and WILLIAM YOUNGE. Produced at the Globe Theatre, May 1.

Jasper Selwyn	Mr. SYDNEY PAXTON	Mrs. Selwyn	Miss MABEL LANE
Mark Humboldt	Mr. CECIL H. THORNBURY	Mrs. Strickley	Miss MADGE JOHNSTONE
Mr. Sympkyn.. ..	Mr. GEORGE SHELTON	Hannah	Miss BLANCHE WOLSELEY

Rarely has a more perplexing and inconsequent farce than *Mr. Sympkyn* been presented to the British public. If to attempt to think of the marvellous tissue of improbabilities that serve to make the plot sets one's brain reeling, how much more difficult must it be to set down on paper in proper order and sequence the events that are supposed to happen? Frankly, the impression left upon our mind by the evening's performance is so shadowy and confused that we honestly admit our inability to give any intelligible idea of the course of the intrigue. We content ourselves, therefore, with stating—always, however, with the reservation that we are open to correction—that Mrs. Jasper Selwyn would appear to have visited the theatre, unknown to her husband, in company with his secretary, Mr. Sympkyn. Mrs. Selwyn having been overtaken by an attack of faintness, assistance was forthcoming from a certain Mark Humboldt, who, although in reality an explorer, represented himself to be a doctor. Meanwhile Mr. Sympkyn had gone off elsewhere, leaving in the box his overcoat, which, however, was not his overcoat, but that of his employer, Mr. Selwyn. Humboldt eventually forces his way into the Selwyns' house, and is led to believe that Mr. Selwyn's aunt is his wife, and his wife his niece. When, moreover, Mr. Selwyn declares that he wishes to get rid of his flat, because it is expensive and dusty, Humboldt at once rushes to the conclusion that Selwyn is speaking of his wife,

from whom he desires to obtain a divorce on the grounds specified. Although this is merely the starting-point of the farce, we have, perhaps, said enough to indicate upon what a flimsy and unsubstantial foundation this farrago of nonsense is built up. Anything less inspiring in performance it would be difficult to imagine. Nevertheless, it would be unjust not to recognise the extreme cleverness revealed by Mr. George Shelton in his delineation of the title-part. So able was his acting, it is earnestly to be hoped that this admirable artist will speedily have a chance of showing what he can do in a character more worthy of his powers.

BELLE BELAIR.

Play in Four Acts, by RALPH LUMLEY.

Produced at the Avenue Theatre, May 19.

Hamilton Pigeon ..	Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH
Sir Barnaby Bullingham	Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR
Garnet Tracey ..	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP
V. Francis Strange ..	Mr. MARTIN HARVEY
Jessop	Mr. ATHOL FORDE
Tipman.. ..	Mr. J. BYRON
Bunting's Man ..	Mr. AUBREY FITZGERALD
Hopwood Tattenham ..	Mr. E. W. TARTER

Shillam.. ..	Mr. F. MACDONNEL
Lady Bullingham ..	Miss LOUISE MOODIE
Vivian	Miss IRENE VANBRUGH
Lady Poltner ..	Miss EMILY FITZROY
Miss Harringay ..	Miss CONSTANCE CROSS
Miss Gertrude Harringay	Miss VIOLET LEY
Mrs. Jessop	Mrs. CAMPBELL BRADLEY
The Hon. Mrs. Belair ..	Mrs. JOHN WOOD

Mr. Ralph Lumley's new play is at once the best and the most ambitious he has yet given to the stage. Its chief fault lies in the fact that the author has lavished too much attention on detail, and somewhat neglected the main issues of his story. The piece consequently strikes one as ill-proportioned and diffuse. Nor is the plot of too plausible a description. In the matter of character-drawing, the author has been more happy. Especially is he to be congratulated on having fitted Mrs. John Wood and Mr. Weedon Grossmith with parts so eminently suited to their peculiarities. The former appears as the Hon. Mrs. Belair, a lady who, twenty years prior to the opening of the play, had contracted a morganatic marriage with Prince Valentine of Carpathia. The child resulting from this union was confided to a solicitor, Mr. Garnet Tracey, who in turn despatched it to his brother in America, substituting his own little baby-girl for the Prince's. When, therefore, Mrs. Belair comes to claim her offspring, and is presented to a young lady named Vivian, her consternation and her anger may be imagined. Luckily, the true heir is speedily forthcoming in the person of Francis Strange, supposed to be an American, who has, by some unexplained means, amassed a large fortune, and who, it happens, has fallen passionately in love with Vivian. The fun of the piece is, however, centred in the courting of Mrs. Belair by a vulgar but good-hearted little city man named Hamilton Pigeon. Very good fun it is too, and carried to the extremest point by Mrs.

Wood and Mr. Grossmith. The young people are played with irresistible vivacity and brightness by Mr. Martin Harvey and Miss Irene Vanbrugh, while Mr. John Beauchamp is altogether admirable as the solicitor Tracey. Indeed, apart from a slight tendency to drag some of the scenes, the piece could not be better acted. The production of *Belle Belair* marks a very substantial advance in Mr. Lumley's reputation as a playwright.

THE OPERA.

The opening nights of the Opera season were remarkable neither for wealth of interest nor for those combined displays of talent which the late Sir Augustus Harris was fond of infusing into his casts at the earliest period of his campaign. They presented for the greater part a procession of *débutants* of both sexes, who do not seem destined to "set the Thames on fire," though two or three of them may perhaps be regarded as useful acquisitions. Amongst the latter may be included M. Noté, a baritone with a stupendous voice but little artistic refinement, who made his first appearance on the opening night (May 13th) as Valentin in *Faust*; M. Scaramberg, an agreeable French tenor, and Mme. Frances Saville, the talented Australian soprano, who came out together on the second night in *Roméo et Juliette*; Mlle. Pacary, a highly-gifted dramatic soprano from the Brussels Monnaie who made her *début* as Elizabeth in *Tannhäuser*; and M. Journet, a fine basso from the same opera-house, who created a good impression both as the Landgrave Hermann and as Marcel in *Les Huguenots*. Another French tenor, M. Dupeyron, who appeared as Raoul in Meyerbeer's opera, was less successful; while Signor Ceppi, an Italian *tenore robusto*, displayed many of the defects as well as the good qualities of his race as Radames in *Aïda*, which work, by the way, served for the reappearance at Covent Garden of the promising American soprano, Miss Susan Strong; of Miss Marie Brema (a first-rate Amneris); and of the popular baritone, Signor Ancona. It should be mentioned that M. Van Dyck made his *rentrée*, with marked success, in the part of Tannhäuser—a splendid impersonation, now heard here for the first time—and subsequently resumed his old part of Faust, with Mme. Emma Eames, Mme. Brazzi, Signor Ancona, and M. Plançon for his principal companions. So far, the majority of the operas were conducted by Signor Mancinelli, two or three being undertaken by that clever *chef d'orchestre*, M. Flon. The

band and chorus are, generally speaking, up to the wonted Covent Garden mark.

IN PARIS.

At the Renaissance, during Holy Week, was produced a sacred piece, *La Samaritaine*, in three tableaux, by M. Edouard Rostand. If we are to have religious plays at all, it seems to us that they are best presented as at Ober-Ammergau, where the performers are a simple, serious set of peasants, who believe in what they represent, and whose lives are one long training for the parts they play. It is this consistency which gives to the mountain "Passion Play" a solemnity which impresses all who go to see it, and this solemnity is lacking when such a play is given in one of the great capitals. Any religious-minded audience must be conscious of a jar when actors who have been portraying all the year the different phases of human passions, noble and ignoble, suddenly appear before the public in the leading characters of Bible history. And for whom but the religious-minded are such plays put on the stage? For those otherwise minded, surely any other play would do equally well, or better. However, it is the accepted custom that such pieces should appear at a certain season in Paris, and there are many striking points and much good handling in M. Rostand's work. The story of the meeting between the Christ and the sinful daughter of the city of Sychar is one of the most poetic and suggestive of all the Bible incidents, and one most suitable for representation. This has been proved before now by the success of Bennett's cantata, *The Woman of Samaria*, which has been so deservedly popular in England. Most poetical and beautiful are the three great scenes of *La Samaritaine*. The first opens with a discussion among the Samaritans as to the long-expected Messiah; then the entrance of Christ himself, his meeting with the Woman, the gentle words in which he shows her the evil of her life, and her instant conversion. The second scene shows us Photine, the same Samaritan Woman, preaching in the streets of her native town, and telling to all the words the Messiah had spoken to her. In the third, a final scene, she leads her fellow-townpeople to Christ, still sitting by the Well of Jacob, where he met her, and there he receives their acclamations and blesses them, and the curtain falls amid cries of joy. It will be seen how simple is the construction of the play; and in this very simplicity lies the grandeur which impressed us throughout. M. Rostand has treated the subject as alone it

should be treated, with breadth of touch. Religious emotion is the theme, and religious emotion in a primitive land, swaying with its power an unlettered Eastern country-folk, and this he has realised most artistically. *La Samaritaine* is written in verse, and though to our taste there is always a suggestion of "stilts" and grandiloquence in French dramatic verse, many passages were enthusiastically clapped. Photine is a rôle after Mme. Bernhardt's own heart. Those who saw her play Isëyl will remember what passion she threw into that very similar part. In Photine, as in Isëyl, she shows us the woman who, in the full tide of a luxurious life, hears the call to a higher one, and in both we have the sudden acceptance of discipleship, and the humble teachableness and submission which she can represent with so true a pathos. Of the other actors little can be said, except that they had but slight scope in the parts allotted to them, which were all subservient to the leading character of Photine herself.

At the Odéon, a comedy in three acts, by MM. Bonsergent and Charles Simon, entitled *Les Irréguliers*, had a success due more to the affecting wording of the principal scenes than to the construction of the plot itself, which is a mass of improbabilities. Lucien Mazerond, abandoned by a worthless wife, has later in life fallen in love with Aline Morel, who, on her side, has been left destitute by the man who betrayed her. She has one child, Robert, and when she links her life with Mazerond's, this latter adopts the boy, and educates him. Robert, however, continues to bear his mother's name, Morel, and is reputed to be her son by a former marriage—we say advisedly a former marriage, for Lucien and Aline pass as married people in the quiet country place they have retired to, and she is addressed as Mme. Mazerond. All goes outwardly well till the time when Robert, who has been studying medicine in Paris, returns, a full-blown doctor, to visit his home, and claim the hand of a young lady in the neighbourhood, whom he has long loved. At this juncture, even the unruffled minds of Aline and Lucien (the pair who have hitherto sat and smiled unmoved over this domestic mine ever ready to explode) begin to grasp the fact that difficulties are imminent. The domestic mine explodes—the "irregularity" of the household arrangements is brought to light by Robert himself, who finds an old letter addressed to "Aline Morel, care of M. Mazerond," and demands an explanation. All is confessed, and all the blame, in some strange way, falls on M. Mazerond. Robert abuses him roundly, demanding, "Why did you not at least marry my mother?" and the long-suffering Lucien's just reply

that it was Aline herself who had refused to marry him seems to count for nothing in this strange family. But why, it will naturally be asked, had Aline refused to marry him? Echo answers, why? A divorce from his disgraced wife was perfectly easy. The only reason seems to be that if she had married Lucien the play could never have been written. The same answer is all we can suggest to the objection that it is highly improbable that Robert should have come to the age of thirty without any suspicions, or that the father of his lady-love, Bertha, should first rage and tear his hair on discovering the truth, and then, for no apparent reason, give his consent to Robert as a husband for his daughter. All is improbable; but this does not condemn the play, and M. Rameau, as Lucien, and Henri Monteux, as Robert, would have saved a far worse piece. Mme. Grumbach and Mme. Deprix were also excellent in their parts.

IN VIENNA.

Mme. Emil Marriott's friends can scarcely rise to a very high pitch of enthusiasm in their congratulations to her on the measure of success attending the first appearance of *Der Heiratsmarkt* (The Marriage Market). Madame Marriott is well known here as the author of numerous *feuilletons*, and the news that she was engaged upon a dramatic work gave rise to great expectations. Short-story writing, however, would appear to be her strength, for her dramatic effort when presented to the public at the Raimund Theater proved to be little more than a well-written *feuilleton* spun out to the extent of three acts. Frau Reichenbach, the wife of a wealthy merchant, has a daughter, Irene, whom she is extremely anxious to see married to a well-to-do man with good social standing. Irene, yielding to her mother's wishes, marries a man whom she does not love, but who possesses the qualifications for which her mother has been seeking. With orthodox precision the villain intervenes at this interesting juncture, he being Alphonse, a loose-living cousin of the young bride, and a painter by profession. Irene repels the encroachments which he seeks to make on her *ménage*, and then begins to find that she has after all fallen in love with her husband. There the simple story ends. The performance of the piece was excellent. The parts of Alphonse and Irene were played respectively by Herr Klein and Fräulein Wertheim.

Two new one-act dramas were produced together at the Volks Theater. In the first of these, *Pietro Caruso*, by Signor Robert Bracco and translated from the Italian by Herr Otto Eisenschitz, the curtain rises on the interior of a wretched Italian hut about which is raging a heavy thunderstorm. In these impressive surroundings Count Fabrizi is discovered in the act of saying farewell to his mistress, Margherita, the daughter of Pietro Caruso, a lazy, drunken highway robber, who has recently let this profession lie for a while in abeyance in order to act as election agitator for the Count. Not only have the Count's hopes of political prominence come to grief through his rejection at the polls, but also the affection which he had entertained for Margherita begins at about the same time to wane, and he seeks to compromise matters with her by offering to reward her father for his services as vote-buyer in a right princely fashion. The poor girl indignantly refuses to fall in with any such arrangement. Her wretched parent then makes an appeal to the Count to treat her honourably, but nothing will move the nobleman, his only reply being a contemptuous remark that no man could marry the daughter of such a father. Caruso thereupon turns to the girl and asks her to tell him faithfully what her feelings are in the matter, and, on her replying "I love him," takes a pistol out of a drawer and goes out and shoots himself in order to remove as far as in him lies the objection which the faithless Count has cited. Whether the old man's self-sacrifice is successful is left to the imagination of the audience, for with this episode the drama abruptly closes. The other new production was that of Herr Richard Nordmann's *Die Liebe* (Love). It turns upon the love affairs of a certain Baroness Edlauer, who, when little more than a child, was linked in matrimony with an old and infirm husband, and for years found her domestic duties limited to those of a nurse. When she is eventually freed from this bond by the old man's death and left a wealthy widow at the age of thirty-two, her hand is sought by a lieutenant, and she is by no means averse to his attentions. Her mother, however, views the matter in a different light, and, learning that the officer has little more than his pay to live upon, cautions him that in the event of her daughter marrying again she will have to surrender all her property. The lieutenant, who is genuinely in love with the Baroness, feels greatly embarrassed by this news, and while he is striving to make up his mind as to what he ought to do, he avoids her whenever possible. Piqued by what she assumes to be a cooling of his regard for her, the young widow accepts another suitor, whereupon the unlucky officer blows out

his brains. Both of the new productions met with success, though the last few scenes of *Die Liebe* failed to hold the interest of the audience quite so well as could have been wished.

IN BERLIN.

Das Neue Gebot (The New Law), by Herr Ernst von Wildenbruch, was enthusiastically received at the Berliner Theater on its first performance. Even when allowance is made for this particular author being "the fashion," it cannot but be conceded that he has again constructed a telling and stirring drama, and has shown his usual aptitude for construction and in the way in which he carries his story from point to point. It is a tale of the time of Heinrich IV., who, indeed, is one of the incidental characters in it; and if the author's history is always to be trusted, as to which we must confess to feeling some doubts, the play would form an admirable means of illustrating the early relations between Church and State.

At the Theater des Westens *Zwei Gluckliche Tage*, a four-act farce by Herrn von Schönthan and Kadelburg, has been revived, with greater success than attended the original production. Its main source of fun is derived from the sorrows and tribulations of a man who takes a jerry-built suburban house—a house veritably "made in Germany." This, combined with farce complications of a very ordinary nature, and aided by some very excellent acting, has been favourably received.

The Princess Chimay, whose every wish and aspiration is being anxiously chronicled by Continental pressmen, has been subjected to the indignity of figuring in a burlesque in which her various doings are satirised with no unsparing hand, and in which she is made to say many things highly inconsistent with her royal rank. Herr Hugo Paskal is the author, and the piece was produced at the Alexander Platz Theater.

Haschisch, a new one-act opera by Herr Oscar von Chelins with the book by Herr Axel Delmar, has achieved well-merited distinction, the composer being highly complimented by both Press and public. At the Thalia *Heirath auf Probe*, a musical farce in three acts, has proved very popular; and at the Unter

der Linden *Der Cognac König*, a piece of much the same kind, is equally successful.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

The event of the month is unquestionably the appearance of Signor Leoncavallo's anxiously-awaited opera of *La Bohème*. The Fenice Theatre, Venice, was the scene of the first performance, and the large audience, which tried the capacity of the building, included the directors of the chief theatres of Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Prague, and other large European cities. The subject is one which Signor Leoncavallo has had in his mind ever since the time when, unknown to the world, he mixed in the Bohemian life of Paris, and saw for himself the scenes so vividly reproduced in *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*. This work, indeed, he has used as the basis of his opera, and it is the pictures therein drawn which he has re-written in the form of verse and set to music. That he has carried out his undertaking well is a matter upon which opinions are in general agreement. The opera opens in Paris, December 24th, 1837, with the assembling of a jovial supper party at the famous Café Momus. Gaudenzio, the proprietor of the café, has previously had cause to complain of the riotous behaviour of the chief members of the party, and also of their far greater disposition to run up long scores than to pay them. On the present occasion he has been comforted by an assurance from Schaunard, a musical member of the fraternity, that he will see him fairly treated. The Christmas Eve gathering includes Rodolfo, a poet, Colline, a student of philosophy, Marcello, a painter, Mimi, the *amica* of the first-named, Euphemia, the confidante of Schaunard, and Musette, a young *grisette* who honours them with her company for the first time. After a scene depicting all the characteristics of a supper of the kind dear to the heart of a Parisian student, the bill is confidently presented by the mollified proprietor. The pockets of the revellers prove to be, however, as empty as usual, and the natural indignation of the worthy Gaudenzio threatens to give rise to a general scrimmage, when a gentleman, then unknown to them, but, in fact, tutor to young Viscount Paolo, offers to pay the reckoning on condition that he should be admitted a member of their Bohemian circle. To this proposition there is by no means a ready agreement; but eventually the matter is put to the issue of a billiard match, and the professor losing, he is allowed to settle the bill without there being any further exhibition of delicate susceptibilities. In the next scene spring-time has arrived, and

Musette has invited her friends to meet her at home, but at the last moment a banker, who was to have borne the expenses, discovers the relations which she has held with the painter, and in a passion sells up the home with which he has provided her. Musette arrives at the house with Marcello, to find it locked up and the furniture standing in the courtyard, while preparations are going on to remove it. The situation naturally strikes them as decidedly awkward, but after a moment's cogitation they resolve not to be deterred by the circumstances, but to carry out the festivities where they are. The opportune arrival of Rodolfo with the sum of thirty francs, which he produces triumphantly as the payment he has received for his first tragedy, provides the means of buying over the porter placed in charge of the furniture and of supplying the materials for an orgie. Matters eventually become boisterous, and the scandalised neighbours, finding protests vain, resort to more active intervention with weighty missiles. In the midst of the confusion which thereupon arises Mimi slips away from Rodolfo's side, and disappears with the young nobleman Paolo. In a subsequent scene Musette also leaves Marcello. Christmas Eve then again comes round, and presents the three young Bohemians in the direst of straits. Suddenly the door opens and Mimi enters. She is wretchedly clad, emaciated, and in the last stages of consumption. For the sake of old times the young men are willing to help her, but they have neither food nor money, and they are wondering what they shall do when Musette also appears. She is richly dressed and well provided with money, and promptly proceeds to do all that can be done for her less fortunate friend. Her help comes, however, too late, and Mimi expires just as the bells begin to ring in Christmas Day. From this brief description of the plot it is not difficult to see what rare opportunities the author has given himself for the introduction of fine scenic effects and variety of composition.

IN MADRID.

Les Lionnes Pauvres, by M. Emile Augier, has been put under tribute by Señores Francos Rodriguez and Gonzalez Llana for the purposes of a drama which they have entitled *El Lujo*. The original work met with an excellent reception in Paris, and it is only necessary to say that the Spanish adapters have dealt most skilfully with it, and that the product of their collaboration in no way falls short in the public estimation of that which served as its basis. *Manolita la Prendera*, a new farce by Señores Gullon

and Curros, with music by Señor Nieto, came to grief at the Apolo through want of vigour. *Los Guantes del Cochero*, a two-act comedy by Señor Javier Santero, achieved a far happier fate at the Lara. It was, however, the outcome of second thoughts, for a previous appearance which it made in a much more cumbrous form was not so fortunate. The reception of *Un Tío Modelo*, another little work of the same character, at the Zarzuela, was of a mixed nature. The authors are Señores Ordonez and Saco del Valle.

IN NEW YORK.

Mr. Augustin Daly's revival of *The Tempest* has met with a very modified degree of success. It is true that the cast, including Mr. Tyrone Power as Caliban, Mr. Charles Richman as Ferdinand, Miss Nancy McIntosh as Miranda, and Miss Virginia Earle as Ariel, was unexceptionable, that the text was not unduly departed from, and that the staging was quite on a level with Mr. Daly's usual magnificent productions, but, in spite of all this, its reception was not such as to give it a place in the permanent evening bill. At the Empire Theatre Mr. Charles Frohman has produced a three-act play by "George Fleming," entitled *A Man and His Wife*, which, as may almost be inferred from the title, is another of the nearly worn-out "triangle" type. The play is, however, well constructed, the situations are handled with great skill, and the dialogue is always crisp and effective. Mr. William Faversham as the Man offered a very telling and picturesque rendering; while Miss Viola Allen, though seemingly overweighted at times, appeared as the Wife to advantage. As the lover Mr. Robert Edeson exhibited considerable force and finish. A comic opera called *The Wedding Day*, in which Miss Lillian Russell, Miss Della Fox, and Mr. Jefferson de Angelis have excellent opportunities for displaying their comedy powers, was extensively advertised on its production at the Casino, owing to some alleged indecencies of word and action. These have been in great part removed, and the piece now bids fair to become one of the few successes of the season. Miss Madeleine Lucette Ryley's newest comedy, *The Mysterious Mr. Bugle*, has received the *cachet* of metropolitan approval after being tried in a few smaller towns. It is every whit as light and as dainty as *Jedbury Junior*, and distinguished by all the delightful characteristics which made Mrs. Ryley's previous comedy so popular. Miss Annie Russell gave a performance well worthy of the play in its charm and grace, and Mr. Joseph Holland also caught the elusive atmo-

sphere of this singularly exquisite piece. *The Man from Mexico* is a farce of a very different order, being of the usual noisy kind characteristic of Hoyt's Theatre, but withal extremely funny, and, though French in origin, bearing none of the more objectionable birthmarks of a French farce. It has been excellently cast and staged, as all plays are at this theatre. At the Garden Theatre, *Dr. Belgraff*, a four-act drama by Mr. Charles Klein, has been well received by all whose judgment is entitled to respect, though its gloomy theme has repelled the paying public. It is a story of hypnotism, suggested by *Trilby*, and Mr. Wilton Lackaye, the most successful of American interpreters of Svengali, plays the old hypnotiser with particular weirdness of effect.

Echoes from the Green Room.

STILL more honours for Sir Henry Irving—from Germany this time. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen have united in conferring upon the leading English actor the Komthur (Commander) Cross of the Ernestine Order of the Second Class. This, as far as we know, is the first instance of a foreign order being bestowed upon an English player as such. The precedent set by the two dukes will be highly appreciated in this country.

IN writing *Madame Sans-Gêne*, M. Sardou used an inkstand, in malachite and ormolu, of the Empire period. This he has now sent to Sir Henry Irving as an acknowledgment of the beauty of the production of the piece at the Lyceum.

M. CLARETIE, the manager of the Comédie Française, continues to find new matter for surprise and delight in the achievements of the London stage, so long treated by his countrymen as a thing hardly existent. Returning to Paris the other day from a brief holiday here, he wrote for the *Figaro* an article on the Lyceum production of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, which he describes as faultless. Sir Henry Irving's Napoleon and Miss Terry's Maréchale are evidently destined to live in his memory.

CONTRARY to rumour, Mr. Bernard Shaw's new little play, *A Man of Destiny*, with Napoleon as its central figure, has not been accepted at, but returned to him from, the Lyceum.

SIR HENRY IRVING delivered two characteristic speeches in opening early last month a representative collection of pictures at Stratford Town Hall. "With these beautiful works," he said, "I have a professional sympathy, since they are like strolling players. I understand that they have already fulfilled a successful engagement in another part of this great borough of West Ham—at Canning Town—and I am sure they will play at Stratford to full houses. In looking over some interesting figures I find that a similar exhibition here two years ago drew a total of 144,000 visitors in eighteen days. That is extremely impressive to a theatrical manager. You must excuse him if, for a moment, his mind is distracted by a vision of an average attendance of 8,000 playgoers at every one of his performances. Your theatre, I see, is called an Opera House, I suppose because you so seldom have operas here. I know there is a very great objection in the minds of many people to call a spade a spade, and many object to call a theatre a theatre. That is not your opinion, I am sure; but I know very well thousands of very estimable people go to see a play at the Crystal Palace who would be horrified if they were asked to see it in a theatre—even a theatre conducted on the excellent and respectable principles of the Lyceum. As regards a municipalised theatre, there is no doubt you will have one in the time to come."

MME. BERNHARDT was on tour in the South at the end of April and the beginning of May.

Jean Marie was played before the Queen at Nice by Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, to whom her majesty sent a signed photograph of herself, and who was asked to sign her name in the Royal album.

MME. PATTI came to town from Craig-y-Nos to sing on May 11, but was prevented by a slight accident—a piece of grit entering her eye—from fulfilling the engagement. Her place was taken by Mme. Albani, whose popularity is attested by the fact that only a few of the audience took back their money.

IN connection with Mr. Wilson Barrett's revival of *Virginius*, Mr. James Drummond sends to the *Westminster Gazette* his father's reminiscences of the first night of the piece. "When Macready produced *Virginius*, I had the distinguished honour of being of the author's party in the side boxes. I had no doubt in my own mind that Mr. Knowles had gone stark mad on that, to him, eventful night. His black whiskers and piercing grey eyes were to be seen in every part of the house—box, pit, and gallery—laughing, fretting, applauding, abusing one time, approving another, but ever and anon when Macready appeared, silent as a statue, though bursting with excitement. The house was a bumper, and the enthusiasm tremendous. . . . Macready did not only look the character well, but in that heyday of his life acted it as no other man could have done. Next to Romeo I always thought *Virginius* Macready's masterpiece."

MR. WILSON BARRETT is often to be found on Sunday and early on Monday at Cheddington, one of the prettiest of villages near London. Lately, perhaps as a result of the success of *The Sign of the Cross*, he sent an elaborate altar cloth to the parish church there, of which his brother-in-law, the Rev. Frederick Heath, is rector.

MOST visitors to Vienna make a point of going not only to the magnificent Royal Theatre and Opera House, built in place of the Ring Theatre that was destroyed by fire, but also to the Volks Theater, where they see excellent acting and discover what sort of plays the Viennese delight in. A company of players from this Volks Theater will be seen in London this year, in addition to all the other foreign troupes by which our shores are annually invaded—in most cases a welcome invasion, and one which we would by no means see repelled. They will give a few performances at Daly's Theatre, beginning on June 28.

MME. MODJESKA'S health has been much improved by a rest at her Californian ranch. She hopes to be able to act during next season, if not continuously, at least for one or two weeks at a time.

MR. TREE likes *Chand d'Habits* so well that he has accepted a more serious pantomime by the same author and composer, *Le Collier de Saphires*, in which he will himself appear.

Under the Red Robe will shortly be followed at the Haymarket by a romantic play from the pen of Mr. Sydney Grundy, the scene of which is laid in France a century and a half ago. Mr. Terriss, leaving the Adelphi for a time, will be the hero, and Miss Emery the heroine.

MISS OLGA NETHERSOLE has returned from America for her eight weeks' engagement in London, after which she will make a tour of the provinces. Late in the summer she goes to Switzerland for a complete rest. She will probably return to America the season after next, there to play Juliet and Camille.

SIGNOR MASCAGNI is strangely silent just now. He seems to be resting on his oars. Can it be, as a critic asks, that the composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, once so industrious and prolific, cannot stand the test of prosperity? Is it that poverty and genius must go hand in hand, and

that when fortune knocks at the door inspiration disappears through the window?

It is seldom that a foreign player meets with success in Paris. Signora Duse's intention to appear there is described in one quarter as simply heroic. France has much less catholicity of taste than England or America, and is at present disposed to believe that the only great actress in the world is Mme. Sarah Bernhardt.

MR. TREE's next play, according to present arrangements, will be one by Mr. Grant Allen and Mr. F. W. Sidney, with himself and Mrs. Tree in what are understood to be striking parts. *The Taming of the Shrew*, as acted by Garrick, may also be looked for at Her Majesty's.

Mlle. JANE MAY's season at the Royalty began last month with a performance of *La Petite Fadette*.

AFTER a provincial tour with his latest successes, Mr. Alexander will produce at the St. James's Mr. Carton's new play, *The Tree of Knowledge*.

THERE will be a special afternoon performance at the Prince of Wales's Theatre on June 6, in aid of the Princess of Wales's Jubilee Fund, the programme consisting of *A Story of Waterloo*, with Sir Henry Irving as the old corporal, and *Pygmalion and Galatea*, with Mr. Frank Cooper as the sculptor, Miss Esmé Beringer as the animated statue, and Mrs. Clement Scott as Cynisca.

MISS FORTESCUE has in hand a new comedy by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, which she describes as being in his "best vein," and which she wishes to produce in London before long. One part she is longing to play is that of Constance in *King John*.

AN excellent illustration of English stage history is to be found in the exhibition now open in the Grafton Galleries. Scarcely a great player of the past is unrepresented on the walls. Most of the portraits are well known, but have an abiding interest and value. Not a few of them are lent by Sir Henry Irving, whose daring originality of style has not made him unmindful of the glories of the past. For a month or two, at least, the old Beef-steak Room of the Lyceum will be poorer by many remarkable works of art. Edwin Long's portraits of Sir Henry as Hamlet and Richard III. are included in the collection.

ONE remarkable feature of M. Filon's work on the English stage, to which we have already drawn attention, is his appreciation of Sir Henry Irving's life-work. "We have before us," he says, "one of those rare careers which are so perfectly ordered towards the accomplishment of some end by a resolute and inflexible will that there is to be found in them no single wasted minute or ill-directed endeavour." He once remarked, "The learning how to do a thing is the doing of it"—"one of the most thoroughly English aphorisms," M. Filon says, "ever given out in England." Triumphant as Hamlet, he "continued to make himself master of all the great Shakspearean roles, like a conqueror annexing provinces. Of course, he was not equally good in all, though to all he brought his understanding and his inspiration, and to all gave the stamp of his individuality." "He is too great for many of his roles; is out at elbow in them, so to speak." "He himself has told us what the first duty of an actor is, to fit his part, to be the character, to personate; and it must be admitted that, in following this principle, he has given proof of a versatility unsurpassed by Garrick himself; yet it would seem that the greater he has grown by study and thought (with the growth of his years and his fame), it has become more and more difficult

for him to squeeze himself into the smaller personalities he has had to represent on the stage, to sink in them that magnetic individuality of his own which constitutes his power."

"IRVING," continues this acute French critic, "seems to me—may I venture to say it without seeming unappreciative of the excellent and even great actors of whom our great country can boast?—to be pre-eminent in his art, the leader of his profession. He compels this admission by the beauty and unity of his life, by the splendid strength of his vocation, by the magnificent variety of his gifts, by his intelligent feeling for all the other arts and for the other ideas which belong to the spirit of the time. And, on the other hand, by the slow growth, the gradual development of his talent, by his spirit of independence and initiative, tempered by regard for the past, he is one of the incarnations of his race, one of those men in whom to-day we see most clearly the features of the English character. He has failed in nothing—he has not even failed to make a fortune. And in respect to this, should anyone charge it against him as a fault, he has given his defence in a saying which I shall quote in conclusion as a finishing touch to his portrait: 'The drama must succeed as a business, if it is not to fail as an art.' And, in truth, does Shakspeare cease to be Shakspeare because in Irving's hand he is also a mine of gold?"

CARICATURES upon the stage of prominent personages are as obnoxious to the Licensor of Plays as they were when one of his predecessors insisted upon alterations in *The Happy Land* and other pieces about twenty-five years ago. President Kruger is not to be so burlesqued in this way, as the company lately engaged in playing *The American Belle* at the Theatre Metropole, Camberwell, learnt on official authority. The piece had previously been running in the provinces for some time without any sort of protest.

THERE was a pleasant gathering at the Bath Club towards the close of April, when Sir Frederick Milner gave a supper in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree. The company included Sir Henry Irving, Miss Ellen Terry, Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord and Lady Skelmersdale, Lord and Lady Henry Bentinck, M. Jules Claretie, Miss Marion Terry, and Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Jones.

MRS. LANGTRY has obtained in California a divorce from her husband, on the evidence of witnesses from London.

MR. WILLARD returns to England early in June.

STRANGE things occasionally occur in the making up of newspapers. Some years ago an elaborate and scholarly article in a morning journal on the Jewish race was followed by a three-line paragraph relating to the importation of pork. Lately, in America, a prima donna's testimonial to an infallible cure for a cold at the shortest notice appeared on the same page as an announcement that, owing to a cold, she was unable to sing that evening.

MUCH discussion has been aroused by the question raised in *The Theatre* last month—namely, what is to be done with those who go late to the play? "I agree with you," a correspondent writes, "that this nuisance is degenerating into a scandal. On the first night of Sir Henry Irving's revival of *Richard III.*, during the courtship scene, a distinguished journalist and his wife annoyed the audience and possibly disconcerted the players by struggling to places in the middle of the stalls. The remedy would seem to be very simple. If the piece has begun, let the late-comers

be compelled to stand aside until the end of the act in progress. In that case they could see what they have paid to see, and would not be, as they are, a positive nuisance both before and behind the curtain."

"*The Theatre*," says the *Birmingham Daily Post*, "holds some very plain language this month to those dilatory playgoers who disturb their neighbours by coming in when a piece has just got in full swing. If theatrical vices of all sorts were not of such proved persistency, we might venture to hope that the remarks should become fruitful."

LIKE Mr. J. F. Nisbet, Mr. Clement Scott is not without a certain faith in palmistry. One Thomas Moore was charged at Leamington last month with pretending to tell fortunes by this means at the Assembly Rooms in that town. In reply, he produced testimonials from clients, the most important of these being from Mr. Scott, who wrote—"The delineation of myself was like listening to the voice of my inner consciousness." The defendant further pleaded that he was paid for phrenological examinations only. The magistrates, however, fined him two guineas and costs.

MR. CLEMENT SCOTT'S new book, *The Wheel of Life*, lately reviewed in these pages, has reached a second edition.

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss Jessie Bond on becoming Mrs. Lewis Ransome, and to Mr. Lewis Ransome on wedding so charming a bride. Ever since her first appearance in *H.M.S. Pinafore* at the Opéra Comique in—must we say it?—in 1878, Miss Bond has been a special favourite with London audiences, and all who can appreciate the genuine humour and daintiness of her acting and singing will hope that they have not seen her on the stage for the last time.

MANY poor London children will have good cause to remember the Diamond Jubilee year. Mr. Lowenfeld, in honour of the Queen's Commemoration, has invited as many little ones as the Prince of Wales's Theatre will hold to attend a morning performance of *La Poupée*, and, while their eyes and ears are delighted by sweet sounds and unaccustomed sights, their "little insides" will be regaled with tea and buns. It is a kind thought, and will give a great deal of happiness to many a mite into whose life there enter but few pleasures of this kind. "Other managers please copy."

A PLAY by Mr. Ralph Lumley, called *The Lay Figure*, and adapted from a piece that did well at the Gymnase last year, will succeed *The Queen's Proctor* at the Strand some time during this month. It will be given under Mr. Arthur Bouchier's direction. The cares of production will prevent Mr. Bouchier's appearance in the performance of *Pygmalion and Galatea*, to be given at the beginning of June in aid of the Princess of Wales's Fund to provide a meal for the poor.

MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT and Mrs. C. L. Carson long ago started the idea of forming an Actors' Orphanage. Mr. Passmore Edwards took it up, and, with characteristic generosity, offered to bear the expense of the building. But how is the necessary endowment to be raised? That was the question before a meeting held in the Criterion Theatre last month, Mr. Wyndham presiding. Mr. Edward Terry and others took a pessimistic view respecting the probable response to the suggested appeal, and the discussion was eventually adjourned. Miss Ellen Terry made a delightful little speech in support of the project, ending with an announcement that she "knew a lady who would aid it to the extent of £1000." As to who that lady is we have no sort of doubt. Mr. Wyndham utilised the occasion to assail the Covent

Garden Fund—which certainly ought to be devoted to theatrical charity in general—and to plead for a tax on players' incomes for a similar object.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr. Charles Ryley, of the Savoy Theatre. He was very young, but had already made a name. In the words of the *Referee*, he was a better actor than most singers, a better singer than most actors.

JOURNALISTS cannot be ubiquitous, but may be recommended not to take very much on trust. The late Mr. Desmond Ryan, musical critic of the defunct *Morning Herald*, did a memorable thing about forty years ago. An important new opera was to be produced at Covent Garden Theatre. Mr. Ryan, wishing to be away from London on the first night, wrote an elaborate account of it from what he saw and heard at the final rehearsal. He dwelt upon the effect of particular passages, adding that the delight of the audience knew no bounds. The critique appeared on the day he arranged for; and great was the horror of his employers on finding that, owing to the indisposition of the prima donna, the performance had had to be postponed. Something of this kind occurred the other day in connection with the non-appearance at the Albert Hall of Mme. Patti. A provincial contemporary stated that she faced a "full and enthusiastic" gathering, sang according to programme, and "granted encore after encore" in "her accustomed smiling and gracious fashion."

MR. BRICKWELL has arranged with Mr. W. S. Penley to produce *An Irish Gentleman*, by Mr. David Christie Murray and Mr. John L. Shine, at the Globe Theatre on June 3.

THE question as to the advisability of introducing famous figures of the past on the stage is likely to be revived before long. Mr. Arthur Bourehier thinks of appearing as the hero in a play which deals with the romantic career of Byron. "Now that I am my own manager," the actor recently told an interviewer, "I intend to take up character parts. I am tired of playing jeunes premiers."

AT the Comédie Française, M. Claretie has granted a month's leave of absence to M. Le Bargy, who will use it to make a tour in the south with the *Loi de l'Homme*.

Frédégonde is to be succeeded at the Comédie Française by a revival of *L'Etrangère*, with M. Paul Mounet as Clarkson and Madame Wanda de Boneza as Mrs. Clarkson.

MME. BERNHARDT recently gave her yearly performance to the students of Paris, the play chosen being *La Tosca*. The stage of the Renaissance that night is described as "literally a bed of flowers."

THE committee of the Comédie Française has accepted, à correction, a piece in three acts, *Dans le Monde*, by M. Berr de Turgue.

M. ROUSSEL, the jeune premier of the Odéon, is going to St. Petersburg for three years.

THE old question whether players should feel the emotions they interpret has again been revived in Paris, this time by a professor at the Sorbonne, M. Binet, who contributes an article upon it to the *Revue des Revues*. Opinions as to it are widely different, as they have been ever since Diderot wrote his *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. M. Mounet-Sully, of course, holds that the artistic emotion should be felt as if it were real. "I have known," he says, "the fury of the parricide." Perhaps the best contribution to the discussion is one by Mlle. Bartet. "When," she writes, "I feel the emotions of the personages I represent, it is from sympathy,

not on my own account." After all, the point at issue is simple enough. The ideal actor ought to have imagination and sensibility in a very high degree, but at the same time must be able to hold both under firm control if he is to comply with the laws of theatrical effect.

MR. MILNES LEVICK, long well-known on the American stage, died at Harlem on Easter Sunday. Born in England in 1822, he went to the United States at a rather early age, achieved success at Barnum's Museum, and acted important parts all over the country with Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, Lawrence Barrett, Rossi, Miss Mary Anderson, Madame Janauschek, and Miss Julia Marlowe. He withdrew from his profession about five years ago. One of his earliest characters was George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

It is announced that Mr. Walter Damrosch and Mr. Charles A. Ellis have gone into partnership for the production of opera in New York and elsewhere next year, on a much broader scale than heretofore attempted by the former alone. Operas are to be sung in French, German, and Italian, and many new singers will be engaged.

MISS OLGA BRANDON will not be a member of Mr. E. S. Willard's company next season, and is looking out for a new play with which she may make a tour in America.

MISS LUCILE HILL, well known on the operatic stage, was recently married to a British army officer in America, her native country. Educated at the Boston Conservatory of Music, she went at an early age to Paris, where, thanks in part to the friendship of Mrs. John Mackay, she achieved an artistic and social success.

THE cry for a national theatre has again been raised in New York. In *Harper's Weekly* Mr. Joseph T. C. Clarke urges that something like the Théâtre Français should exist in that country. Such a theatre, he says, "would foster and formalise the dramatic genius and performing skill of a continent. The writer for the American theatres has no incentive to the higher forms of his art. The American student who might become a playwright has no chance of seeing the best plays outside of books. When we continually concede the superior craftsmanship of the French dramatists, do we give thought to the formative influence of the Théâtre Français upon the young minds of France?" We must not forget to add that Mr. Clarke believes in private endowment rather than a State subvention.

MR. RICHARD MANSFIELD has in contemplation a revival of *Timon of Athens*.

MR. J. E. DODSON is coming to England for a summer vacation.

MR. WILLIAM WINTER was recently entertained at dinner by the Lotos Club. Is he about to put down the pen? One part of his speech was almost valedictory. "My career as a writer about the stage," he said, "seems to be drawing to a close. It has been freighted with exacting responsibility; it has been inexpressibly laborious, and its conclusion would cause me no regret. I have no enmities; and if ever in my life I have wounded any heart, I have done so without intention, and I hope that my error may be forgiven."

